

**>TRADE DEADLINE PREVIEW<**  
THE BUZZ ON YOUR TEAM • 10 PLAYERS TO WATCH • JAMES DUTHIE'S WILD DAY

# The Hockey News

IS THIS THE FACE OF A

## COACH KILLER?

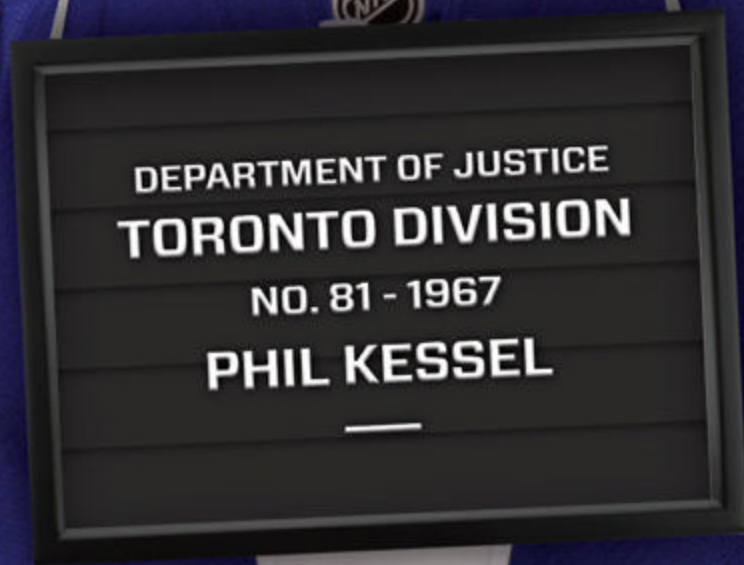
**OUR VERDICT**  
ON PG. 22

**MARTIN  
BRODEUR**

A Special  
Tribute

**BLUELINE  
BLOWOUT**

Ranking The  
D-Corps



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# The Hockey News

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March 9, 2015  
Vol. 68 No. 17-18

## IT'S ALL A BLUR

If you blinked, you missed Shea Weber's rocket at the all-star skills competition.



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# THE OTHER IMMENSE TRADE

Imagine Ovechkin-Green for Doughty-Carter. That's ostensibly what happened nearly 40 years ago



**T**HE WAYNE GRETZKY SHOCKER to L.A. will always be hockey's pre-eminent swap. It is, after all, known simply as "The Trade."

That said, the first seismic, earth-shattering, mind-blowing blockbuster to register on my Richter scale happened more than a decade earlier, on Nov. 7, 1975, when the Rangers sent Jean Ratelle, Brad Park and Joe Zanussi to Boston for Phil Esposito and Carol Vadnais. To borrow a line from Greg Kihn, they just don't write 'em like that anymore. (If you don't get the reference, Google *The Breakup Song*. Then sit back and let your ears drink in the party).

In today's NHL, you get the occasional big-name player shipped out, for financial or rebuilding purposes. The bounty he fetches is typically draft picks, prospects and young players. It's almost always a buyer-seller arrangement, due largely to the confines of the salary cap.

But 40 years ago, in 1975, the "real" hockey trade was thriving and there was none bigger than the Bruins-Rangers transaction.

Consider three of the five players (Esposito, Park, Ratelle) earned places in the Hall of Fame. Esposito was the biggest fish, an immense superstar with the personality to match. Boston's captain had won five of seven Art Ross trophies, was a two-time Hart winner and a key cog on two Cup champions. He was also a national icon in Canada thanks to his epic performance, and rant, during the 1972 Summit Series. He was 33 at the time of the deal and had many miles left on the engine.

Park is the best defenseman never to win the Norris. He can thank Bobby Orr for that distinction, but he has a stellar resume nonetheless. A stalwart at both ends, Park was 27 when the trade was consummated and had been named to five post-season all-star teams.

Ratelle, an alternate captain on the Summit Series squad, possessed a combination of size, talent and grace. While he was 35 in 1975, he was actually more productive in Boston over parts of six years than in New York, averaging more than a point a game in his "twilight years."

Vadnais was a slick-skating rearguard known more for offense than defense. He had participated in four All-Star Games by 1975.

Today, the deal would be akin to the Caps moving Alex Ovechkin and Mike Green to L.A. for Drew Doughty, Jeff Carter and a fringe player. In other words, virtually unthinkable. But oh, so memorable.

**NEXT ISSUE** FUTURE WATCH 2015

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# GAME READY

## WITH HEATHER AND MARTIN ST. LOUIS

*We had the chance to sit down with NHL® great and Olympic gold medalist Martin St. Louis and his wife Heather while they were in Toronto recently. Here are the top things that Heather and Martin St. Louis need to be game ready.*



**MY DAY STARTS WITH**  
Coffee.

### FAVORITE FAMILY TIME

Other than dinner, family time typically involves some form of physical fitness. We try to bike ride or play tennis as a family whenever Martin's schedule allows.



### MY FITNESS REGIMEN

We have always shared a commitment to being physically fit. Once lunches are made and the kids are at school, I'm out walking the dogs, taking a fitness class or going for a long run.



### MUST HAVE

Lip balm. As far as my day-to-day beauty regimen is concerned, I'm pretty low maintenance. But if you ask anyone who knows me, I'm never without my lip balm.



**MY DAY STARTS WITH**  
Coffee.



### FAVORITE FAMILY TIME

Every summer we take the boys back to Quebec. I think it's important for them to spend time with my family and see where I grew up.



### MY FITNESS REGIMEN

I've always loved working out. Obviously it's an important aspect of me being a professional athlete, but I really do enjoy it. Weights, cardio – it's a ritual for me.



### MUST HAVE

Crest® SENSI-RELIEF™. I suffer from tooth sensitivity, especially from anything cold. Ironical since I spend so much time on the ice. Brushing with Sensi lets me worry about the cold less, and focus on the game more.



Sarah Tam, SDM Pharmacist

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# TRUE NORTH STRONG

Thank you to Ken Campbell and *The Hockey News* for highlighting the life and career of J-P Parise, who passed away early this year ("Guts, Glory and Gumption," Feb. 16). I recall as a youngster watching and being inspired by Parise's passion as a workman-like player and true "northern Ontario" Canadian, especially during the 1972 Summit series when there was so much more at stake than just affirming Canada as the greatest hockey nation at the time.

Chris Gasparini, Kenora, Ont.



LOVE OR HATE ONE OF OUR FEATURES/STORIES?  
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## PUCKPOLL

IS MARTIN BRODEUR  
THE GREATEST GOALIE  
IN NHL HISTORY?



The last paragraph of your J-P Parise In Memoriam states Parise is "just the second player from the 1972 Summit Series to pass away." He is actually the third or even the fourth. Bill Goldsworthy was the first, but Gary Bergman died in December 2000. He played in all eight games and had an amazing series. Rick Martin also passed away, in 2011, although while he was a member of team, he did not play in any of the games.

Rod Allison  
Hamilton, Ont.

All our prayers go out to the Parise family as J-P is called home. The Lord has one more terrific forward for his team. God bless you, J-P.

Joe Connor,  
Pennsville,  
N.J.



## A-PLUS FOR PAUL

Thank you for giving Jets coach Paul Maurice a "Plus" in the Feb. 16th issue. Always liked him as a coach, and now he goes into 'The Peg' and completely rejuvenates that team, making it one of the top teams in the Central. Great work, Paul.

Josh McKernan,  
St. Catharines, Ont.

## FEELIN' MINNESOTA

Ryan Kennedy's column on the Minnesota high school ranks reflects just how little many people in hockey truly understand the Minnesota hockey culture (The Straight Edge, Jan. 26). An NHL scout is quoted as saying "everything is too easy for them" - therefore he encourages players to leave the state. Considering that more than 60 percent of Minnesotans currently in the NHL completed their high school careers and nearly 80 percent played at least two years of prep hockey, the facts don't merit a scout telling a 15- or 16-year-old kid that he should leave home if he wants to achieve his NHL dreams. As a parent I would have no interest in sending my son away just to try to make a scout's job easier, especially since most NHL

scout's success rate in the NHL draft with CHL prospects is so low, especially after the first round. Keep your kid home and tell the scout to develop an imagination.

Ken Pauly,  
Plymouth, Minn.

I'd be remiss if I didn't respond to Ryan Kennedy's "State of Disrepair" column. Sure, there are recent defectors to other higher-level leagues such as the WHL, USHL, U.S. NTDP or others, but that's been going on since the Jamie Langenbrunner days. However, take a look at your same Jan. 26 issue: In your NHL Team Reports "2014 Player Of The Year" notes, Justin Faulk (Carolina), Nick Bjugstad (Florida), Kyle Okposo (Islanders) and Blake Wheeler (Winnipeg) all played high school hockey in Minnesota. Plus, Phil Kessel (Toronto) and Sidney Crosby (Pittsburgh) also went up against a lot of those high-schoolers during their Minnesota days, at the University of Minnesota and Shattuck-St. Mary's, respectively. And there's a pile more of high-caliber NHLers who played high school hockey in Minnesota that I didn't mention. The State of Hockey is not in disrepair.

Tom Peterson  
Minnetonka, Minn.

## GRASS IS GREENER

Every time talk of NHL expansion comes up all that's considered is population and economies ("The NHL's Vegas Staycation," Jan. 26). Those are important, but one thing the experts don't talk about is grassroots hockey. It is never discussed how many children in that city are playing the game or how many of the adults did. It's great if putting a team can attract new fans, but the best place the NHL can go is where fans already exist.

Adam Stiles,  
Saskatoon, Sask.

## NOT SO WORLDLY

Here's all you need to know about the ridiculous new World Cup format: had the 2010 Olympics been played under the same format, Team Canada would have been without Sidney Crosby, Jonathan Toews and Drew Doughty, while the semifinalists from Slovakia wouldn't have even been there. And NHL commissioner Gary Bettman has the gall to refer to this travesty as a "best on best?" It's not even a real international tournament. International hockey is for national teams. I never thought I would have to point that out.

Jan Burton, Toronto





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IN CANADA<sup>4</sup>**

**GUTS-GLORY**



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\*Based on a comparison of 2015 EnerGuide highway fuel consumption ratings for 2015 Ram 1500 4x2 with 3.0L EcoDiesel HFE V6 and 8-speed automatic (up to 35 MPG highway) and 2015 Ford F-150 4x2 EcoBoost V6 6-speed automatic (up to 31 MPG highway). <sup>1</sup>Based on 2014 Automotive News Full-Size Pickup segmentation. Optional feature available. <sup>2</sup>Based on third-party Canadian competitive "trade-in" data for MY2008 to MY2013 new full-size pickups. <sup>3</sup>When properly equipped. <sup>4</sup>Based on longevity of entire Ram large pickup segment compared to all competitive large pickups on the road since 1988. Longevity based on IHS Automotive: Polk Canadian Vehicles In Operation data as of July 1, 2013, for model years 1988-2013 for all large pickups sold and available in Canada over the last 26 years.



# INSIDE HOCKEY



BOB  
MCKENZIE



## WHEELING AND DEALING

From Eva Mendes to Brian Burke, Trade Deadline Day always takes the TSN crew on a wild and wacky ride

BY JAMES DUTHIE

**T**HE PHONE RINGS AT 3:45 A.M. Sorry pings, not rings (it is March 9, 2004, and I have an old-school BlackBerry). You know those sudden jolting wake-ups that interrupt the sweetest, deepest of dreams? One second you're rubbing

sunscreen on Eva Mendes' back while she lies in the sand...of the bunker beside 18 at Augusta where you just won your third Green Jacket...wearing a mask and flippers for the entire final round (I have no idea)...and PING! PING! PING!

### NATURE KEEPS CALLING

Duthie's No. 1 problem on TSN's Trade Centre? Getting to the washroom during commercials.

Suddenly Eva's gone and you jump up in your bed and have no idea where you are or why it sounds like there are five fire trucks in your room.

I finally grasp that it is my phone and not Ladders 65-68 driving under the bed. PING! PING! PING!

"Wha...Uhh...Helloooo"

"James, it's Mark."

Mark? Mark who? Mark Ward or Mark Tadiello, my two best friends from high school? Mark Messier? Mark's Work Warehouse saying my polar fleece socks are in? Mark Wahlberg? (I'm still groggy.)

"Wha...what time is it?"

"It's 3:45. You need to get in right now." (Oh, Mark Milliere. My boss.) "It's been a crazy night. Todd Bertuzzi badly injured Steve Moore. We're going on early."

"How early?"

"As soon as you get here."

I shower and make the half-hour drive to TSN. Our producer and director are there, but no one else. The studio is dark. They are determined to go live at right away, and so at 5:27 I am sitting at my desk, with one cameraman pointing a single light at me (the lighting guy also hasn't arrived). Tradecentre is known for breaking records for number of commentators. But this show will apparently begin with one.

We end up holding off for another half hour. Glenn Healy shows up and the two of us begin the show alone. The moment anyone shows up, they join us. By 7:30, it's a full house, and one of the longest Tradecentre's ever is in full swing.

At least we had something to talk about that day, as awful as it was. There have been other Tradecentres where it's so slow you can see the tumbleweeds roll across our set. The mornings are always the worst. Even on busy years, trades don't start until around noon, sometimes later. Until then, we are a telethon of speculation. Except no one calls in to donate. In 2013, we do four and a half hours of Network Time Killers (as Letterman used to call them) until the first trade, a blockbuster seeing Chicago send minor leaguer Rob Flick to Boston for minor leaguer Maxime Sauve. "And the balance of power in the NHL has shifted dramatically!"

Flick later joins us for a phone interview, where I have to resist from opening with, "So, Rob...who the hell are you?"

All the big news had happened early that year. The last-minute lockout settlement to save a half-season, Brian Burke being fired by the Toronto Maple Leafs, the Iginla trade. During the show, someone from a number I don't recognize



sends me an endless stream of texts, ripping our coverage.

10:33 a.m. This show is brutal.

11:10 a.m. ZZZZZZZZZZ.

11:45 a.m. Somebody kill me now.

12:37 p.m. What a gutless interview. Ask some hard questions.

1:52 p.m. Couldn't they get Gino to host?

I figure it is one of my buddies and am amused for a while. But after the 13th text or so, I've had enough.

2:35 p.m. Okay, uncle. I don't have your contact in my phone. Who is this?

2:36 p.m. It's Burkie! Miss me?

Actually, I do. One of our annual rituals on Tradecentre is interviewing Brian Burke, with his shirt open and tie off, draped around his neck like he's been working for six straight days trying to save the planet from a meteor about to hit it. He inevitably shoots down all my questions with one-word answers and a menacing stare. It's endless fun. I'm sadistic like that.

At around 5 p.m. that same day, one of the slowest ever, after nine hours on the air, producer Geoff Macht says in my earpiece, "Need you to fill a couple more minutes here." I turn to the panel and have... zero. And so I say, for the first time ever (though I have thought it often): "So do you think...Is there a trade that...Has any team...(pause). Who am I kidding...I literally have nothing left to ask you guys." Which doesn't bode well for the hour we still have to fill.

Then there are years when the deals never stop. In 2008, we have Wade Belak (R.I.P.) on the phone early in the day after he is traded from Toronto to Florida. A minute into the interview another trade breaks. I ask Belak to stay on the line, saying, "We'll get right back to you." But then it's trade after trade after trade for the rest of the day. About seven hours later I get a text from the always darkly funny Marc Crawford: "Is Wade Belak still on hold?"

One trade deadline just



**BURKE SHOOTS DOWN ALL MY QUESTIONS...IT'S ENDLESS FUN. I'M SADISTIC LIKE THAT** – James Duthie

before I started hosting, we get Ron Tugnutt on the phone and ask him how he learned he'd been dealt. "I was in the bathroom and heard it on TSN." We don't press for more details.

The Tradecenters (usually known as the Insiders – everyone gets new names just for Tradecentre) have it tougher than the rest of us. They must relentlessly harass all their sources, to the point where they often spend the next few months mending fences. In 1999, Bob breaks Vinnie Damphousse being traded from Montreal to San Jose within seconds of the deal being agreed to. Imagine hanging up the phone with the other GM and TSN already has it fonted on the TV screen in front of you. "What the...?!?" The Canadians are flying that day and a reporter on the plane uses an airphone to call his desk. He hears about the deal and lets everyone on the plane know. The plane lands, everyone gets off except Vinnie, who heads back to Montreal to pack.

In 2014, Darren Dreger is talking to an Islanders source, trying to find out where Thomas Vanek is going. At about the same time, Ray Ferraro is on the panel, ripping the Islanders organization for, oh, just about everything they'd done that year. Dregs' source is watching the

show while they talk. Now Dregs is getting yelled at for what Ray is saying 20 feet away.

While the Insiders worry about breaking news and getting every detail right, my single greatest challenge on Tradecentre is looking out for No. 1. In other words, peeing.

Our commercial breaks are typically two minutes. The bathroom is maybe a 30-second walk or 15-second sprint from my seat. That includes getting my microphone off. Don't want to have a Leslie Nielsen/Naked Gun scene where the entire studio and control home get to hear my...err...live streaming. But to get to the stall, I have to go full Russell Wilson; deking out cameras, crewmembers, food tables and Pierre Lebrun groupies just to get there. If it's occupied, I'm screwed. Thankfully my floor director most years, Ellen, is a pit bull. She makes sure the stall is free, then clears a path like an All-Pro pulling guard, screaming "COMING THROUGH!" the entire time. Ellen is always my MVP on Tradecentre.

But if I don't make it in time, it's no biggie. We break a



This is an excerpt from James Duthie's forthcoming book, **THE GUY ON THE LEFT**, from Penguin Books. It's scheduled to be in bookstores this fall.

## B.B. GUN

Brian Burke always has plenty of verbal bullets for Duthie and the TSN crew on Deadline Day.

lot of traditional TV rules on Tradecentre. People get up and leave the desk in the middle of a conversation if an important call comes in. We take the trades and analysis seriously, just not the show. It has really become a parody of itself – a bizarre piece of Canadiana. Twenty-five hockey commentators stuffed in a room for 12 hours, talking about Rob Flick.

That's why we used to have Jay Onrait (before he was deported to America) doing live reports from his apartment in a bathrobe. Once he spent several minutes naming his plants: Bob Mckenztree, Jennifer Hedge-r. That's quality Canadian television right there.

In 2013, I ask for a soundboard to amuse myself during low points of the show. It has crickets for the quiet times (the crickets get used often), canned laughter for the corny jokes and a loon call, just because I find the call of the loon soothing.

We do one better in 2014, bringing in Lester Maclean, a TSN staffer and talented singer/musician who I have collaborated with on several silly pieces in the past (The delay of game penalty ballad *Puck Over Glass* being the most well known). Lester and I write a handful of Tradecentre related songs that he performs throughout the show, including *Burkie Interview*, surely to be covered someday by Lady Gaga.

Chorus:

*We need a Burkie interview  
We need a Burkie interview  
He's gonna yell at Duthie  
His tie's gonna be loose*

Yes, Tradecentre is slowly morphing into a Broadway Musical. Sometimes it's a comedy, sometimes a tragedy. Either way, we'll keep singing and dancing our asses off...all day long.

## THE INSTIGATOR

By Charlie Teljeur



## In The CARDS

**FOR THE SEVENTH TIME IN CANADA**, and the fourth in the United States, Upper Deck will give away free hockey cards during their National Hockey Card Day program. Fans who visit a participating trading card shop on Feb. 14 in Canada or Feb. 21 in the U.S. will receive a free pack of five exclusive cards. Both American and Canadian sets will consist of 16 cards focusing on each country's top talent, past and present. An added twist this year will be "retro-themed" Young Guns, designed to look like 1990-91 Upper Deck Cards. To find a nearby retailer, visit [facebook.com/NationalHockeyCardDay](https://www.facebook.com/NationalHockeyCardDay)

BY SAL BARRY OF PUCKJUNK.COM

## BOOK REVIEW



## FACING GRETZKY

It was an impossible task trying to halt an unstoppable force

**HOW DO YOU DEFEND** against the most dominant offensive force of all-time?

In *Facing Wayne Gretzky*, Brian Kennedy compiles interviews from former teammates and opponents of Wayne Gretzky to chronicle the maddening task of trying to stop him. A colorful cast breaks down Gretzky's uncanny ability to counter any strategy and will his way onto the scoresheet. Defensive minds such as Mark Howe, Denis Potvin and Rob Blake explain how No. 99's legacy was built on more than just skill. The interviews describe Gretzky's legendary intensity, drive and vision like works of art.

Those who shared the ice with Gretzky recall the most memorable moments of his career: the Oilers Cup runs, his 51-game scoring streak and 50 goals in 39 games. Especially engaging is Larry Murphy's dissection of the shift that led to the game-winning goal at the 1987 Canada Cup.

This oral history will entertain anyone interested in the impossible task of stopping The Great One, who was always a step ahead of everyone else.

— MARK KRANJC



# ENJOYING THE GREAT OUTDOORS

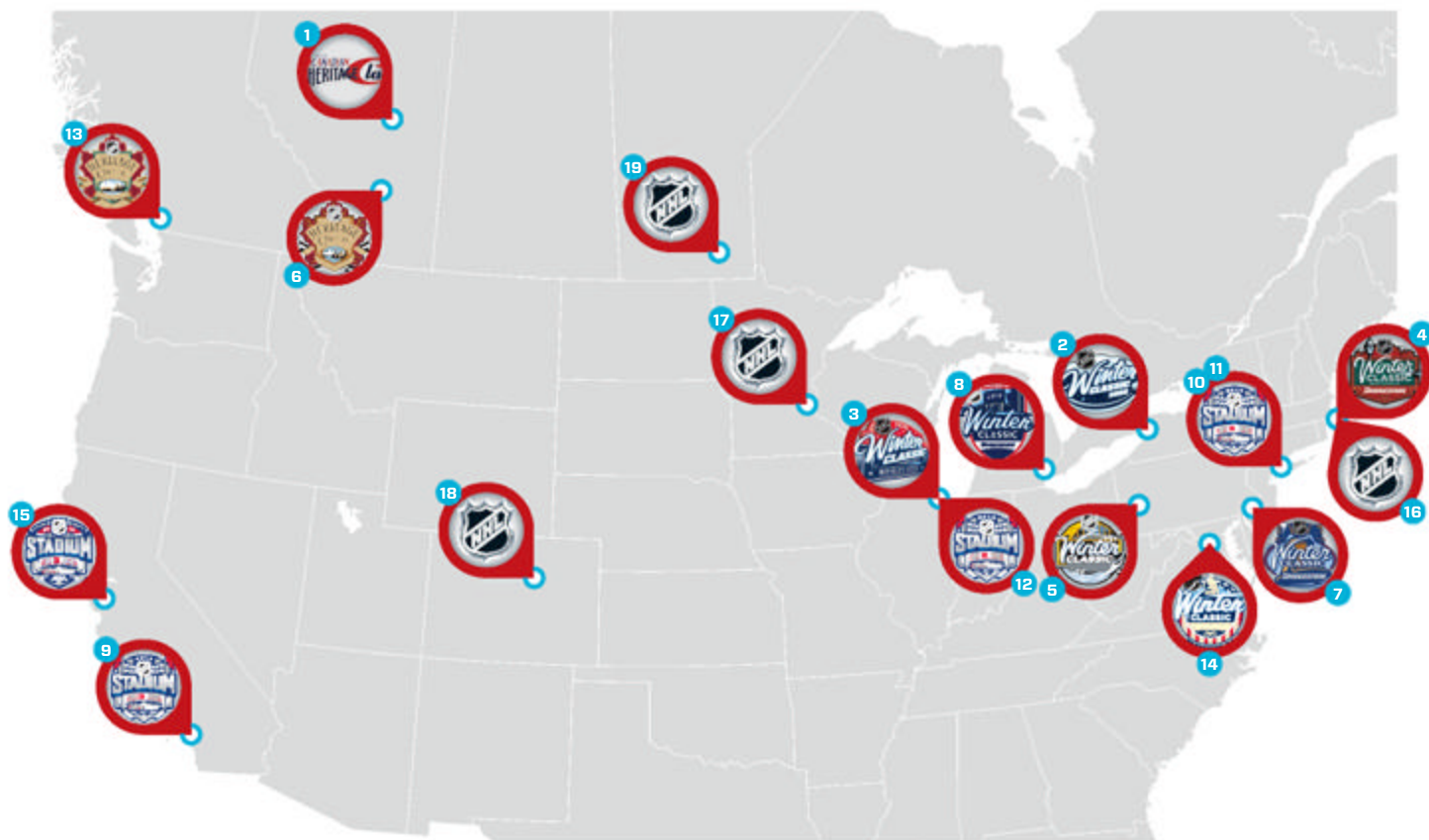
**IN JANUARY, THE NHL ANNOUNCED IT WILL** hold outdoor games in Boston, Colorado and Minnesota next season and in Winnipeg, versus a TBD foe, in 2017, bringing the number of franchises that have played outside to 22.

The tradition started as a novelty in 2003, when Edmonton hosted Montreal at the inaugural Heritage Classic. Five years later, the league began holding its annual Winter Classic

and the number of outdoor matches surged with the addition of the Stadium Series in 2014.

The NHL is becoming more ambitious with its locations, as California gets set to host its second outdoor game in as many years when San Jose takes on Los Angeles Feb. 21.

It may border on oversaturation for some, but these record-breaking, money-making games are here to stay. — **MARK KRANJC**



DATE	VENUE	LOCATION	HOME	AWAY	WINNER	CAP/ATT	OTHER
1. Nov. 22, 2003	Commonwealth Stadium	Edmonton			Montreal: 4-3	57,167	Heritage Classic
2. Jan. 1, 2008	Ralph Wilson Stadium	Buffalo			Pittsburgh: 2-1 (SO)	71,217	Winter Classic
3. Jan. 1, 2009	Wrigley Field	Chicago			Detroit: 6-4	40,818	Winter Classic
4. Jan. 1, 2010	Fenway Park	Boston			Boston: 2-1 (OT)	38,112	Winter Classic
5. Jan. 1, 2011	Heinz Field	Pittsburgh			Washington: 3-1	68,111	Winter Classic
6. Feb. 20, 2011	McMahon Stadium	Calgary			Calgary: 4-0	41,022	Heritage Classic
7. Jan. 2, 2012	Citizens Bank Park	Philadelphia			Rangers: 3-2	46,967	Winter Classic
8. Jan. 1, 2014	Michigan Stadium	Ann Arbor, Mich.			Toronto: 3-2 (SO)	105,491	Winter Classic
9. Jan. 25, 2014	Dodger Stadium	Los Angeles			Anaheim: 3-0	54,099	Stadium Series
10. Jan. 26, 2014	Yankee Stadium	New York			Rangers: 7-3	50,105	Stadium Series
11. Jan. 29, 2014	Yankee Stadium	New York			Rangers: 2-1	50,027	Stadium Series
12. March 1, 2014	Soldier Field	Chicago			Chicago: 5-1	62,921	Stadium Series
13. March 2, 2014	BC Place	Vancouver			Ottawa: 4-2	54,194	Heritage Classic
14. Jan. 1, 2015	Nationals Park	Washington			Washington: 3-2	42,832	Winter Classic
15. Feb. 21, 2015	Levi's Stadium	Santa Clara, Calif.			TBD	68,500	Stadium Series
16. Jan. 1, 2016	Gillette Stadium	Foxborough, Mass.			TBD	68,756	Winter Classic
17. Feb. 21, 2016	TCF Bank Stadium	Minneapolis, Minn.			TBD	52,525	Stadium Series
18. Feb. 27, 2016	Coors Field	Denver, Colo.			TBD	50,398	Stadium Series
19. TBD	Investors Group Field	Winnipeg			TBD	33,500	Heritage Classic

# GLOBAL WARMING

The NHL has greenlit a World Cup of Hockey for 2016. It's never too early to project each team's roster

BY MATT LARKIN

**W**AS THE NHL'S WORLD CUP ANNOUNCEMENT A STEP TOWARD OLYMPIC PARTICIPATION in 2018? Who knows? The two tournaments are separate entities. The Olympics and their revenues belong to the IIHF, whereas the 2016 World Cup of Hockey lines the NHL's pockets. That's the whole point of the thing.

And perhaps it's because the NHL wants to make an extra buck that it introduced such a gimmicky format when commissioner Gary Bettman announced the event at all-star weekend in Columbus. The field will include staple contenders Canada, the United States, Sweden, Russia, Finland and the Czech Republic but also manufactured squads Team Europe and the North American Youngstars. The former features players from every remaining European nation, from Slovakia to Denmark. The latter: Canadians and Americans 23 or younger when the tournament starts in September 2016. The Western World's babyfaces won't be eligible to play for their countries no matter what. Sorry, Nathan MacKinnon. Jumping the gun be damned, we can't help but take a crack at who makes each roster.



MARIO LEMIEUX



## TEAM CANADA

**Sidney Crosby** leads a roster closely resembling the dominant 2014 Olympic gold medal team. The age-23 cutoff doesn't hurt Canada much, especially at forward. Steve Yzerman's teams skewed toward stars in their primes and, if he's replaced, the new GM won't fix what ain't broke (consider that Steven Stamkos didn't make the Olympic team his first time eligible). No team can match the Canadians' defense corps, and they're so stacked up the middle that an outstanding pivot like Tavares or Patrice Bergeron will have to play the wing.



### PROJECTED 25-MAN ROSTER

GOALIES			1 <sup>ST</sup> PP UNIT
Carey Price	M-A Fleury	Roberto Luongo	
DEFENSEMEN			1 <sup>ST</sup> PP UNIT
Duncan Keith	Drew Doughty	Doughty	
Shea Weber	Alex Pietrangolo	Weber	
Mark Giordano	P-K Subban	Nash	
Marc-Edouard Vlasic	Kris Letang	Crosby	
LEFT WING			1 <sup>ST</sup> PP UNIT
John Tavares	Sidney Crosby	Steven Stamkos	
Rick Nash	Ryan Getzlaf	Corey Perry	
Jamie Benn	Jonathan Toews	Tyler Seguin	
Logan Couture	Patrice Bergeron	Ryan Johansen	
CENTER			1 <sup>ST</sup> PP UNIT
Claude Giroux	Jeff Carter		



## TEAM UNITED STATES

The American roster lacks Canada's superstar appeal, but is nothing to sneeze at. The forward corps has size and speed to spare, led by shifty **Patrick Kane** and goal scorers Zach Parise, Phil Kessel and Joe Pavelski. Ryan Suter heads a blueline of primarily two-way types who all play huge minutes on their NHL clubs. One distinct advantage the U.S. has over its North American neighbors is goaltending depth. Jonathan Quick remains an elite big-game stopper, and Ben Bishop and Cory Schneider are great fallbacks.



### PROJECTED 25-MAN ROSTER

GOALIES			1 <sup>ST</sup> PP UNIT
Jonathan Quick	Ben Bishop	Cory Schneider	
DEFENSEMEN			1 <sup>ST</sup> PP UNIT
Ryan Suter	Kevin Shattenkirk	Suter	
Ryan McDonagh	John Carlson	Shattenkirk	
Justin Faulk	Dustin Byfuglien	Parise	
Cam Fowler	Erik Johnson	Stepan	
LEFT WING			1 <sup>ST</sup> PP UNIT
Zach Parise	Derek Stepan	Patrick Kane	
J. van Riemsdyk	Joe Pavelski	Phil Kessel	
Max Pacioretty	David Backes	Kyle Okposo	
Nick Bjugstad	Tyler Johnson	Ryan Callahan	
CENTER			1 <sup>ST</sup> PP UNIT
Ryan Kesler	T.J. Oshie		



## TEAM SWEDEN

The Swedes will mean business at the 2016 tourney after a silver medal run in Sochi. They're the only team that comes close to matching Canada on defense, sporting an elite group that includes **Erik Karlsson**, the world's best offensive rearguard, and outstanding youngsters Oliver Ekman-Larsson and Victor Hedman. The Sedin twins are too old to carry the load up front anymore. Nicklas Backstrom is the key cog, with fresh-faced wingers Gus Nyquist and Filip Forsberg seeing increased responsibility now that they've broken out in the NHL.



### PROJECTED 25-MAN ROSTER

GOALIES			1 <sup>ST</sup> PP UNIT
Henrik Lundqvist	Anders Nilsson	Jonas Enroth	
DEFENSEMEN			1 <sup>ST</sup> PP UNIT
Oliver Ekman-Larsson	Erik Karlsson	Hedman	
Victor Hedman	Anton Stralman	Karlsson	
Niklas Kronwall	John Klingberg	Zetterberg	
Hampus Lindholm	Niklas Hjälmarsson	Backstrom	
LEFT WING			1 <sup>ST</sup> PP UNIT
Alexander Steen	N. Backstrom	Gustav Nyquist	
Filip Forsberg	H. Zetterberg	Patric Hornqvist	
Daniel Sedin	Henrik Sedin	Loui Eriksson	
G. Landeskog	Mikael Backlund	Elias Lindholm	
CENTER			1 <sup>ST</sup> PP UNIT
Mika Zibanejad	Jakob Silfverberg		





## TEAM RUSSIA

Say hello to the World Cup's wild card, and it's not one of the gimmick teams. We have no idea what to expect from Russia because (a) it choked as the Sochi host after entering the Olympics as a gold medal contender and (b) the KHL clouds its roster outlook for 2016. The NHL has not disallowed players from any other leagues at the World Cup, so Russia should have no restrictions on roster choices - assuming the KHL approves. **Alex Ovechkin** leads a team with an amazing top-six forward group, strong goaltending and suspect defense.



### PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

GOALIES		
S. Bobrovsky	S. Varlamov	Andrei Vasilevskiy
DEFENSEMEN		
Andrei Markov	Slava Voynov	Markov
Yevgeny Medvedev	Alexei Emelin	Ovechkin
Fedor Tyutin	Nikita Nikitin	Kovalchuk
Dmitry Kulikov	Nikita Zadorov	Malkin
		Tarasenko
LEFT WING	CENTER	RIGHT WING
Alex Ovechkin	Evgeni Malkin	Vladimir Tarasenko
Ilya Kovalchuk	Pavel Datsyuk	Alexander Radulov
Danis Zaripov	Artem Anisimov	Nikita Kucherov
Nikolay Kulemin	E. Kuznetsov	Viktor Tikhonov
	Yegor Averin	Valeri Nichushkin



## TEAM FINLAND

No team can touch Finland in net, where it has the choice of **Tuukka Rask**, Pekka Rinne or Kari Lehtonen. The rest of the Lions roster, however, is largely in transition. Saying goodbye to legends Teemu Selanne and Saku Koivu means the new guard must step up. Will it be Teuvo Teravainen? Aleksander Barkov? Kasperii Kapanen? Each has a chance to make a big splash. Finland's blueline bursts with exciting prospects, though it wouldn't be surprising to see wily Kimmo Timonen give it one more go at 41 next September, health permitting.



### PROJECTED 25-MAN ROSTER

GOALIES		
Tuukka Rask	Pekka Rinne	Kari Lehtonen
DEFENSEMEN		
Olli Maatta	Rasmus Ristolainen	Maatta
Kimmo Timonen	Sami Vatanen	Vatanen
Ossi Vaananen	Juuso Hietanen	Jokinen
Julius Honka	Ville Pokka	Filppula
		Granlund
LEFT WING	CENTER	RIGHT WING
Jussi Jokinen	Mikko Koivu	Mikael Granlund
Lauri Korpikoski	Valtteri Filppula	Teuvo Teravainen
Leo Komarov	A. Barkov	Sean Bergenheim
Tuomo Ruutu	Jori Lehtera	Petri Kontiola
	Erik Haula	Kasperii Kapanen



## TEAM CZECH REPUBLIC

Will **Jaromir Jagr** stay for one last international event? The big fella will be a whopping 44 by September 2016, but if any athlete can pull it off, it's No. 68. He keeps himself in phenomenal shape, and he's famously patriotic. The Czechs have the weakest blueline of any team in the tournament, but their young forwards have risen up. Jakub Voracek, Ondrej Palat, Tomas Hertl and David Pastrnak give them something to get excited about. Ondrej Pavelec blew his chance in net at the Sochi Olympics. How about handing Petr Mrazek the keys?



### PROJECTED 25-MAN ROSTER

GOALIES		
Petr Mrazek	Alexander Salak	Ondrej Pavelec
DEFENSEMEN		
Jan Hejda	Zbynek Michalek	Kaberle
Lukas Krajcek	Marek Zidlicky	Zidlicky
Tomas Kaberle	Radko Gudas	Jagr
Andrej Sustr	Roman Polak	Krejci
		Voracek
LEFT WING	CENTER	RIGHT WING
Ondrej Palat	David Krejci	Jakub Voracek
Tomas Hertl	Roman Cervenka	Jaromir Jagr
Jiri Hudler	Tomas Plekanec	Radim Vrbata
Milan Michalek	Martin Hanzal	David Pastrnak
	Vladimir Sobotka	Michael Frolik



## EUROPEAN ALL-STARS

Talent isn't the problem with a European all-star squad. Peek at the projected roster and you'll see a team full of NHLers from Denmark, Slovakia, Switzerland, Germany, Belarus, Norway, Latvia and, of course, Anze Kopitar's Slovenia. The question is whether this team can gel. Mark Streit spoke out against the event, claiming he won't have the same motivation when he's not representing his country. Streit will take some convincing to play at all. Maybe fiery checkers like **Zemgus Girgensons** can inspire their new mates to play for an upset.



### PROJECTED 25-MAN ROSTER

GOALIES		
F. Andersen	Jaroslav Halak	Jonas Hiller
DEFENSEMEN		
Zdeno Chara	Dennis Seidenberg	Ehrhoff
Christian Ehrhoff	Roman Josi	Chara
Andrej Sekera	Mark Streit	Vanek
Mirco Mueller	Andrej Meszaros	Kopitar
		Gaborik
LEFT WING	CENTER	RIGHT WING
Thomas Vanek	Anze Kopitar	Marian Gaborik
Mikkel Boedker	Mikhail Grabovski	Tomas Tatar
Mats Zuccarello	Frans Nielsen	Marian Hossa
Nikolaj Ehlers	Z. Girgensons	Nino Niederreiter
Antoine Roussel	Leon Draisaitl	



## NORTH AMERICAN YOUNGSTARS

The controversial North American Youngstars squad consists only of players 23 and younger. As an age cutoff, we used Sept. 17, 2016, the World Cup's start date. Standouts **Nathan MacKinnon** (Canada), Aaron Ekblad (Canada), Jacob Trouba (USA) and Johnny Gaudreau (USA) would've made our projected national team rosters if they weren't ineligible. This team looks plenty competitive, but its lack of experience in goal sticks out. John Gibson has to stand on his head. Raising the age limit to 25 for puck-stoppers would've been fairer.



### PROJECTED 25-MAN ROSTER

GOALIES		
John Gibson	Malcolm Subban	Zach Fucale
DEFENSEMEN		
Aaron Ekblad	Jacob Trouba	Rielly
Ryan Murray	Doug Hamilton	Ekblad
Morgan Rielly	Seth Jones	Gaudreau
Damon Severson	Cody Ceci	N-Hopkins
		MacKinnon
LEFT WING	CENTER	RIGHT WING
Brandon Saad	R. N-Hopkins	Nathan MacKinnon
J. Gaudreau	Connor McDavid	Ryan Strome
J. Huberdeau	Sean Monahan	Boone Jenner
Alex Galchenyuk	Sean Couturier	Jack Eichel
Jonathan Drouin	Bo Horvat	



## BLADES OF WHEELS

Swedish NHLers are lining up to invest in a revolutionary skating technology on and off the ice

**P**ER MARS WAS GRABBING A beer with a fellow hockey player in Sweden when the subject of off-ice conditioning came up. They talked about how they'd spend hours and hours in the summer sculpting their bodies for the upcoming season by running and biking, yet when it came time to take the ice for training camp, it still seemed as if they'd

spent the off-season lounging on the couch. "At the start of hockey season it felt like we hadn't worked out at all during the summer," said Mars, a 2001 draft pick of the Columbus Blue Jackets who played pro in Sweden. "I came to the conclusion that the problem is that running and biking is just too far away from ice skating and doesn't train the right muscles."

### SWEET SWEDES

Per Mars, left, with Marsblade CEO Hans Victor, show off their Swedish skating sensation.

“  
TRADITIONAL  
ROLLERBLADES  
WERE NOT AT  
ALL LIKE ICE  
SKATING

— Per Mars

That moment was the genesis for the idea that led to the Marsblade, a new inline skating system that closely replicates the stride used at the rink. "It feels like you are skating on the ice," said Detroit Red Wings captain Henrik Zetterberg, one of 13 current NHL players among 18 pros who have invested just more than \$7 million Swedish Crowns (approximately \$1 million U.S.) in the Marsblade. "When you rollerblade, you don't get the same technique as you do on the ice. With this one, it definitely gets you closer. It will be a big difference."

### THAT ICY FEELING

The length of stride and freedom of movement helps Marsblade feel more like ice skating.



HENRIK  
ZETTERBERG



The science of the Marsblade, called Flow Motion Technology, has been designed to enable a natural and soft movement pattern, which improves the performance and comfort of ice skating and inline skating. "Traditional inlines were not an option for me since the feel of skating on them was not at all like ice skating," Mars said. "I felt that it ruined my skating technique rather than it helped me. I then came up with the idea to place the rounded shape of the hockey blade between the shoe and the wheels to simulate the imbalance and movement that is created with the hockey blade."

As the weight shifts in the skate, the upper part rolls over the lower surface, following the skater's movement pattern, which both lengthens the stride and increases freedom of movement. It's the combination of these two key characteristics that enables faster turns and higher speeds.

Marsblade's inline skates are already on the market, and an ice-skate prototype is currently being tested. Several NHL players, including Henrik and Daniel Sedin twins and Detroit's Niklas Kronwall, already utilize the Marsblade as part of their off-season training regimen. "It makes sense," said Kronwall, another investor. "It's a very interesting product." — **BOB DUFF**



# ICE MAKES THE PERFECT WAVE

According to its founder, this summertime tradition debuted in an unlikely and sparsely attended place

**G**EORGE HENDERSON DIDN'T think it would happen where it did. Sure, he had been a professional cheerleader for years, but the co-ordinated momentum that built through the McNichols Sports Arena in Denver Nov. 15, 1979, was entirely different. "The Wave" has become a staple of large, primarily summertime sporting events. So synonymous is the wave with such events that many point to an Oct. 15, 1981 playoff game in

Oakland between the Athletics and the Yankees as its debut.

Henderson, better known as 'Krazy George' and the inventor of the wave, remembers its origins differently. "It actually started at a Colorado Rockies hockey game," he said. "I had been doing it there for two years, but there was always such a small crowd that I never had it documented."

While it seems strange for a northern Californian to have started the wave with a small-



time NHL team, Henderson had long been a hockey fan. "The very first team I ever loved were the Oakland Seals, not as a cheerleader but just as a fan," he said. "Munson Campbell was the GM with the Seals and then he went to Colorado. He hired me for four years. I moved to Colorado and it was a great relationship. I had the time to invent something like the wave."

## MILE HIGH MAYHEM

The inventor of the wave, 'Krazy George,' said he started it at a Colorado Rockies game in 1979.

For many fans of the NHL in non-traditional markets in the late 1970s and early '80s hockey was a novelty. He received continued support from fans who appreciated his audacious approach with the wave.

Support even came from the game's greatest player. As the Edmonton Oilers were working toward four Stanley Cups in the mid-80s, Henderson took the wave to the Northlands Coliseum and found a new fan. "I got everyone just going completely crazy when I did the wave in Edmonton," Henderson said. "After the game their coach asked me to go into the locker room. I burst in with my drum and started pounding it. Wayne Gretzky was so impressed because he'd never heard a crowd so responsive and animated in his life." — JOSHUA KLOKE

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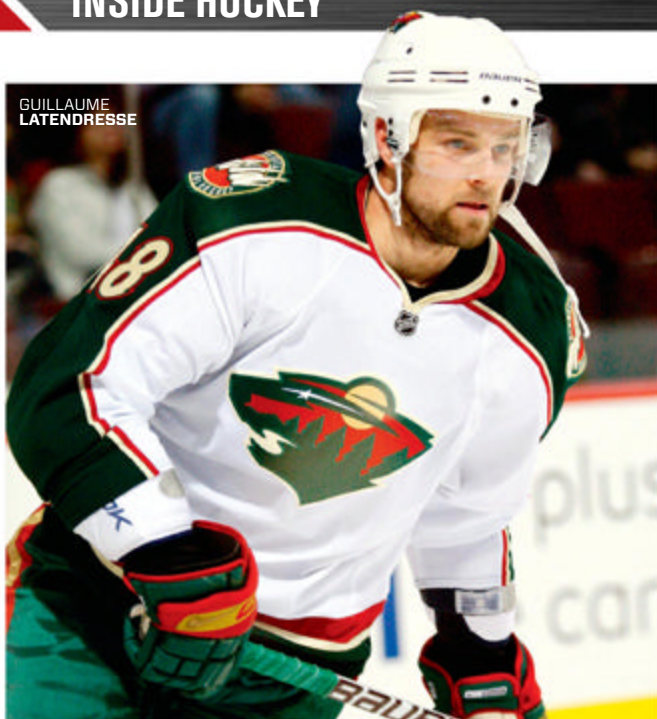
Today, Ephesus sports lighting is shining brightly in scores of top-flight arenas and sports facilities throughout the United States and Canada, including the Canadian Tire Centre, Webster Bank Arena, Ricoh Coliseum, and many more. Feedback has been fabulous. Players say they play better. Fans say they see better. And broadcasters rave about the picture-perfect HDTV quality.

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GUILLAUME LATENDRESSE



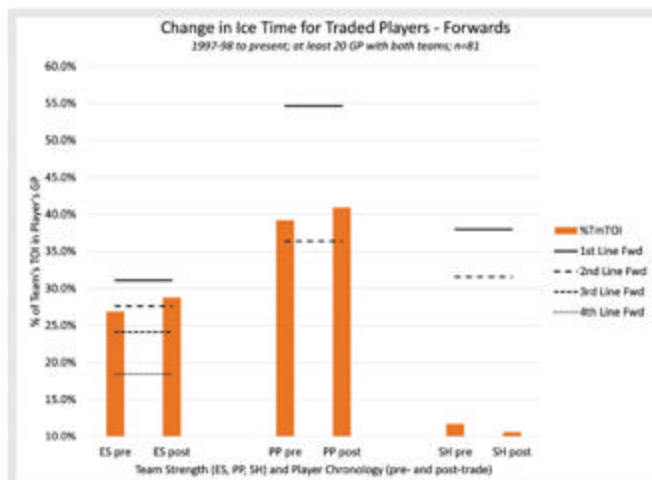
## VISUALIZING THE TRADE

Deadline buyers beware: whether a trade pays off typically depends on how a coach uses a new player

**M**ID-SEASON TRADES ARE A BIT OF A CURIOSITY IN THE NHL. THEY'RE usually, at least on one side, expressions of immediate purpose – though intuitively both teams are getting someone they want. From a player's perspective, it's revolutionary, even if the results don't show it: a new home, new fan base, new teammates.

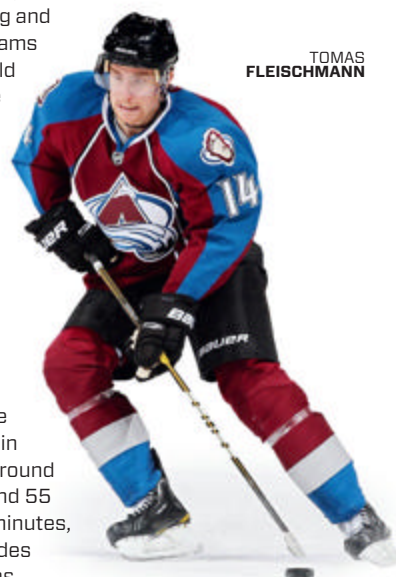
Analytically, a trade is a sliding of variables for both teams, as all at once depth and deployment are affected. In the past, trades were often discussed in the context of whether a player "catches on" with his new team – the idea being that when a player catches on, he scores more points. Think of how successful the Minnesota Wild's trade for Guillaume Latendresse looked in 2009-10, when he put up 37 points in 55 games, or how Colorado's 2010-11 acquisition of Tomas Fleischmann looked when it yielded 21 points in 22 games.

Compiling all the mid-season trades from 1997-98 to the present, and focusing on players that competed in 20-plus games for both teams in a single season, I began to notice the impact a coach's player usage had on whether the player "caught on." One way to show this is by expressing a player's ice time as a percentage of a team's total time on-ice in the games they participated in (TOI%), pre- and post-trade. TOI% is a valuable statistic overall, because it's more truly reflective of contribution. An example: last season, Sidney Crosby was on the ice for approximately 36 percent of his team's even-strength minutes. Since you can't hide on a hockey rink, it's reasonable to say he played an important role in 36 percent of his team's even-strength play. In terms of trades, TOI% can tell us whether traded players tend to be given more substantial roles in their new homes:



I included markers in the charts to indicate the average TOI% of typical NHL forward lines and defensive pairs. As you can see, players tend to get used more after being traded. In the case of forwards, that meant breaking into the top-six and an increase in power play responsibilities. For defensemen, it meant jumping nearly to the top pairing and an across-the-board special teams increase. Once again, this should make sense. Teams don't make a habit of acquiring players they don't want. The result in production ("catching on") for all players was about .08 more points per game – the difference between Kyle Okposo and Tyler Seguin last season.

Another way to visualize the change in ice time is via "TOI Charts," which show TOI% progression over the course of a season. Using Latendresse and Fleischmann, and keeping in mind top-line forwards hover around 30 percent of even-strength and 55 percent of teams' power play minutes, we can visualize how these trades impacted the forwards' seasons.



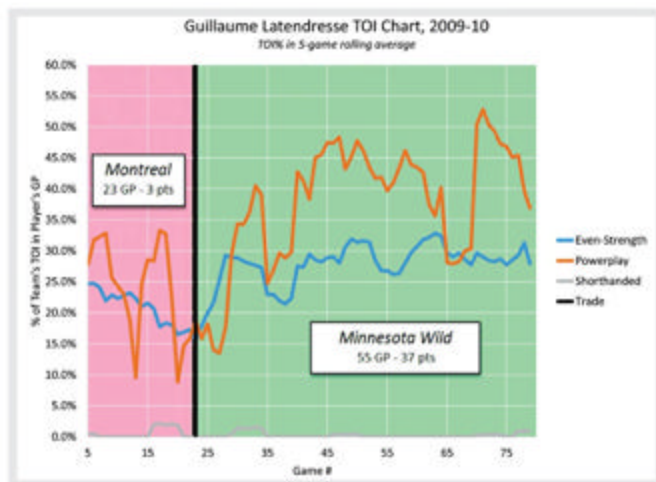
TOMAS FLEISCHMANN



## GUILLAUME LATENDRESSE | 2009-10

*Montreal Canadiens to Minnesota Wild*

When Jacques Martin took over the Habs in fall of 2009, Latendresse's polarizing skill set put him on the wrong side of the coach. The Wild, similarly disaffected with 2005 first-round pick Benoit Pouliot, made a one-for-one trade. Here's how these swaps impacted the forwards' seasons:

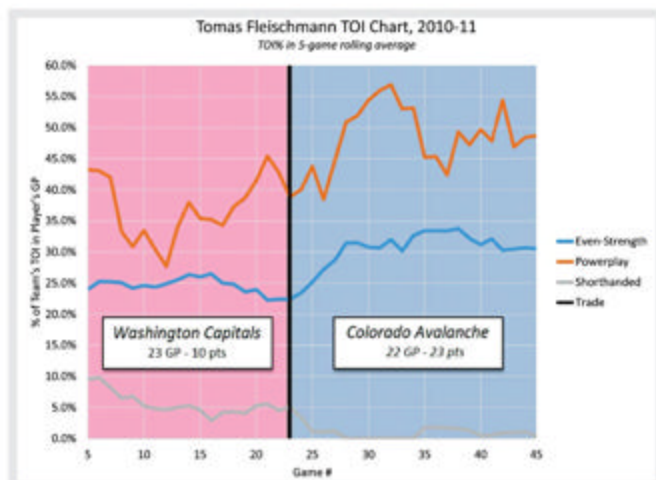


Latendresse revived his career, though the injury bug has since virtually ended it. Pouliot scored 15 goals in 39 games for Montreal that season, putting him at better than a 30-goal pace.

## TOMAS FLEISCHMANN | 2010-11

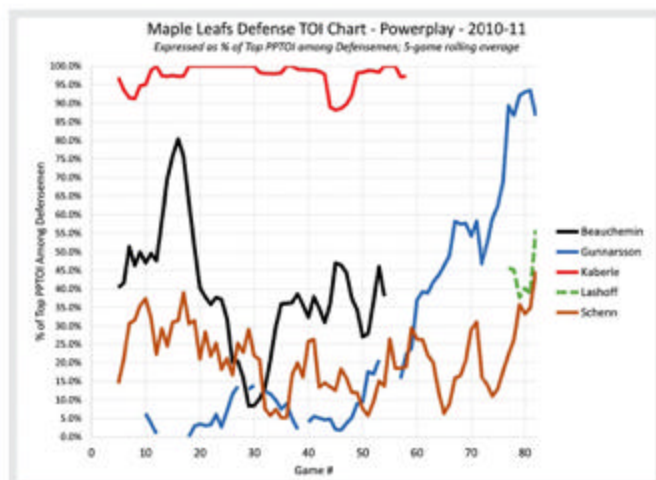
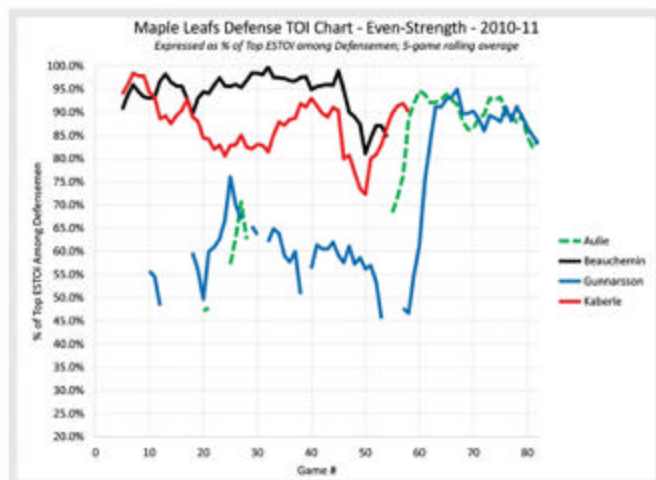
*Washington Capitals to Colorado Avalanche*

Like Latendresse, Tomas Fleischmann's potential vs. results were maddening for Capitals management and, after a rough start to 2010-11, Washington sent him to the Colorado Avalanche for defensive defenseman Scott Hannan.

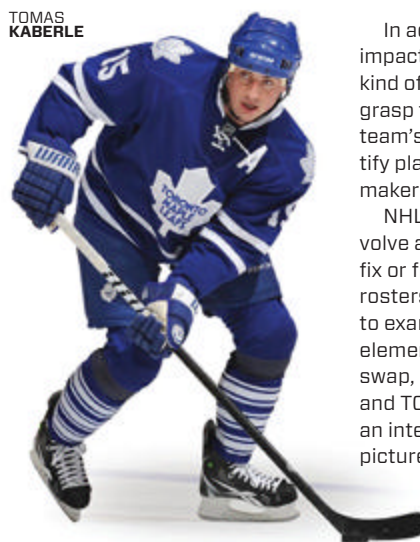


Fleischmann took off in Colorado and netted a big contract with the Florida Panthers the following summer. After a couple years as one of their most dangerous forwards, he has cooled of late, with three straight seasons of declining point totals. These charts bring out a big driver in Latendresse and Fleischmann's success: increased usage, especially in terms of offense, by their coaches. In other words, there are few greater killers or saviors of a player's career than a team with a different attitude toward them.

TOI charts can also show the impact of a trade on the depth of a team's forward lines and defense pairings. By comparing the progression of TOI% for all the defensemen on the 2010-11 Toronto Maple Leafs, for instance, we can see who was used to "replace" Tomas Kaberle when he was swapped for Boston's Joe Colborne and a first- and second-round pick in 2011:



TOMAS KABERLE



In addition to depicting the impact on players, with this kind of charting we can better grasp the reasons behind a team's struggle and help identify players who are difference makers.

NHL trades frequently involve a shakeup as teams try to fix or fill issues they see in their rosters. While it's interesting to examine the asset-for-asset element of the mid-season swap, using devices like TOI% and TOI charts can give us an interesting, multi-layered picture of how a trade affects the players and their teams.

— BENJAMIN WENDORF



> MARTIN  
**BRODEUR**  
1992-2015





# MARTIN BRODEUR

TRIBUTE TO A LEGEND

## I'M LEAVING WITH A SMILE

*All I wanted was one NHL game. I got 1,266, plus enough championships and records to make me feel like a man blessed*

By **Martin Brodeur**



**T**HERE WAS NOT MUCH TIME TO THINK. If there had been, I might have said to myself, "How did I get here with Vladimir Ruzicka standing in front of me with the puck on his stick in the third period of a tie game with a playoff spot on the line? Wasn't I just playing cards with my buddies in the rickety stands of Stade L.P. Gaucher in St-Hyacinthe, Que., two days ago?"

That was the first big save I ever made in the NHL. Ruzicka, who ended up scoring 39 goals with Boston that year, was alone in front of the net and he stopped and tried to deke me. It was pretty much a staple save for me – stack the pads with my blocker extended. Of the almost 34,000 saves I've made in the regular season and playoffs, I still remember that one like it was yesterday. We won, the Devils clinched a playoff berth for the 1992 post-season and I had knocked two of the biggest items off my bucket list at the age of 19.

As I reflect on my 22-year NHL career that started with that game on a Thursday night in March, I'm struck by how lucky and blessed I was to have experienced it. This is not a word of a lie, there were times in my life when all I wanted to do was to be able to tell my buddies back in St-Leonard that I had played one NHL game. That was it. Then it was one win, then one Stanley Cup. The NHL seemed like such a hard mountain to climb at the

time and now that I'm at the top of that mountain looking down at my career, I can do so at complete peace with myself. As I said at my retirement news conference, I'm leaving this game with a smile on my face.


If I had to pinpoint the moment in time I truly became a New Jersey Devil, it would probably be the fall of 1996. We had just come off winning the Stanley Cup and I was in a contract dispute with the Devils. My agent, Gilles Lupien, was telling me I could get more money, but there was no way I was going to miss the raising of my first Stanley Cup banner. So I drove myself to New Jersey and told Lou Lamoriello, "Whatever your offer is, I'll sign it." I didn't care about the money, never really did, but what I did care about were my teammates and winning games.

And we did a lot of winning in New Jersey. I think it bothered my family and friends more than it bothered me that people would always say I was the product of the Devils system. I really didn't care what people thought because I played to win. I was happy, my teammates were happy and the boss was happy. When you have the guy who has the most wins ever, what more can you say?

I think I really turned the corner when I won the gold medal in 2002 and people realized I'm not just the goalie of the Devils. It's funny because I had had better seasons prior to that, but that was when

I started winning Vezina trophies. When I stepped outside the box of the Devils, people realized more what I was bringing to the table. I was always second fiddle to Dominik Hasek, but a lot of other goalies were, too.

And if there was one thing I learned from the Devils and my late father, Denis, it's that you can't do it alone. It wasn't like I was some prodigy out on an island finding my way. I had a lot of support and great teammates, from Scott Stevens to Ken Daneyko and all the way down the line. The guy I grew closest to, though, might surprise you. David Clarkson was a guy who, on a personal level, I cherish the most. I talk to him on the phone every couple of days. I was just on the phone with him yesterday. He was one of the kids I helped a lot to fit in when he was younger and I kind of pushed him to be the player he is and it's kind of nice to see him moving on and having success. Right now it's a little rocky, but I don't care about that. I care about him.

And as I move on to my new career and watch my two sons find their way in this game, I get to contemplate my legacy. The records I've set are pretty high, but I hope someone has the drive to do it some day. One thing is for sure – they're not moving targets anymore. Somebody can take aim at them. Maybe it's some kid out there who's dreaming of playing just one NHL game, the same way I did. 



# MARTIN BRODEUR



## RUNNIN' WITH THE DEVILS

Then-Devils head amateur scout Marshall Johnston, top left, had no idea he had a future Hall of Famer or the best puckhandling goaltender of all-time on his hands when he drafted Martin Brodeur 20th overall in 1990, but by the time he led the Devils to their first Stanley Cup five years later, the organization had a pretty good indication how special he was. Brodeur and the Cup were regular companions, uniting on three occasions – sometimes with his famous photographer father, Denis, middle.





#### GOLDEN MOMENTS

Brodeur's contributions were undeniable after he helped Canada to gold in 2002. All the glory years with the Devils ended emotionally last season, before Brodeur went to St. Louis, where he netted the last three of his record 691 wins.





# PHIL KESSEL ON TRIAL

Is the linchpin of the foundering Leafs  
“uncoachable” or a “coach killer?”  
You might be surprised by the answer

BY KEN CAMPBELL

**C**OLUMBUS – IT’S THE FRIDAY before the All-Star Game, and the NHL is conducting its (almost) annual dog and pony show with (almost) all the best players on the planet. It’s All-Star Media Day™ and Phil Kessel is being a remarkably good sport about it. He’s holding court, and though you get the sense in reality he’s about as comfortable as Richard Nixon during his first debate with John F. Kennedy, he’s doing his best to be whimsical. Clad in an NHL-issued hoodie and a Toronto Maple Leafs hat, he’s sporting what looks like a perpetual five-day growth, never getting shaved nor ever becoming more hirsute. Away from the 63-ring circus that is his existence with the strug-

gling Maple Leafs, Kessel is as comfortable as he’s been in public in, well, forever, even though he tacks “right?” and “you know?” on the end of every sentence as though he’s searching for some kind of affirmation.

This is clearly not a Marshawn Lynch moment with a guy who has to be here to keep from getting fined. The way the NHL plays fast and loose with this event in terms of letting players off the hook for attending, it wouldn’t have surprised anyone if the league had allowed him to stay behind in his hotel room and watch movies all afternoon. The thing is, though, he’s been on the road a lot lately, and he’s seen every movie in the hotel loop of cinematic offerings. “Not the bad ones, though,” he says after some prompting. “Stay away from those.”

## FACE THE MUSIC

Phil Kessel is the awkward face of the, well, equally awkward Toronto Maple Leafs.





His inquisitors walk away from the 23-minute all-star gabfest muttering, "What the hell just happened there?" or "His agent must have talked to him." So much of what Kessel does is judged through the prism of the superficial, and that's probably not fair. Do Maple Leaf fans care whether Kessel stands in front of the cameras and speaks for his team? Not really. Would he be given more slack if he looked like Patrick Sharp, had the flare of P.K. Subban or rescued stray puppy dogs the way David Backes does? Probably.

The opinions about Kessel as a person are as varied as they are of him as a player. They range from David Quinn, bench boss at Boston University who coached him when Kessel was with the under-17 team in the U.S. National Team Development Program and with the U.S. world junior team in 2005. "I love him," Quinn says. "He's a likeable guy, but he's socially awkward." Don Lucia, who coached Kessel for one year at the University of Minnesota, calls Kessel, "a reluctant superstar." To this from a rival team executive: "You can't argue with his productivity, but he's an unlikable, miserable son of a bitch. Nobody wants to be around him."

is better than some players' slapshots. His quick hands and feet make him one of the most dangerous players in the game when things are going well. Over the past four seasons going into this one, Kessel had 126 goals and 278 points, and since missing the first 12 games of his career with the Leafs because of a torn labrum that required off-season surgery, he has been remarkably durable, playing 416 consecutive games through early February. Prior to 2014-15, only Claude Giroux (303), Martin St-Louis (302), Alex Ovechkin (285) and Steven Stamkos (285) had more points over the previous four seasons than Kessel. Only Stamkos (159), Ovechkin (153) and Corey Perry (145) scored more goals than Kessel's 126 since 2010-11.

But the 2014-15 season, which just happens to coincide with the first season of a contract extension that pays Kessel \$10 million in salary and sees him occupy \$8 million worth of cap space through 2021-22, has been an unmitigated disaster, both for the Leafs and Kessel. In 2011-12, then-GM Brian Burke likened the season "akin to an 18-wheeler going off a cliff," but that's beginning to look like a fender bender compared to this season. Under former coach



## YOU CAN'T ARGUE WITH KESSEL'S PRODUCTIVITY, BUT HE'S AN UNLIKABLE, MISERABLE SON OF A BITCH. NOBODY WANTS TO BE AROUND HIM

— rival NHL team executive

A former teammate with the Boston Bruins who requested anonymity still speaks of Kessel with contempt, saying he was lazy, had no respect for the hierarchy of a dressing room and conducted himself with contempt and indignance. "Coaches have time for his skill, but no time for his personality," the former teammate says. "He's a smug, silver-spooned little bastard. And Boston got rid of him. What does that tell you?"

Contrast that with the words of Joe Colborne of the Calgary Flames, who played with Kessel as a frequent call-up to the Leafs before his trade to Calgary. "He's such a great guy and such a good teammate, and the guys love him so much," Colborne says. "He might come off as a guy who doesn't care or isn't a good teammate, but behind closed doors in the dressing room, he's so loved. The guys love him. I feel badly for him because he's a much better person than he's being portrayed."

On the ice, Kessel has blinding, explosive speed. The combination of stick technology and tree-trunk wrists give him a shot coming off the wing that flies off his stick quicker than any other in the game. His wrist shot

Randy Carlyle, the Leafs were five games over .500 and in a playoff spot. In the first 12 games after firing Carlyle and replacing him with Peter Horachek, the Leafs were 1-10-1 and were watching another lost season float away, three points closer to qualifying for the No. 1 overall draft pick and 13 from qualifying for the playoffs.

And, naturally, Kessel has become a target. With just two goals and four points in 12 games under Horachek, he was being outscored by defenseman Cody Franson and journeyman checker Daniel Winnik. Under Horachek, the Leafs are supposedly playing the game the right way, but the only problem is that the team that could strike like a cobra and had arguably the quickest transition in the league now gets the puck out of its zone as though pushing a manhole cover. Teams were always wary of getting involved in a track meet with the Maple Leafs under Carlyle. Now a baseball game looks frenetic by comparison. They were mired in the longest losing streak in the almost-100-year history of the franchise, and in the first 725 minutes played under Horachek, they held a lead for exactly 78 minutes and 20 seconds.

Never a favorite with the analytics crowd, Kessel doesn't come out looking good when you crunch the numbers. As of early February, his Corsi rating in close games was just 43 percent, in a league where 50.0 is the average and many of the stars are in the high 50s or low 60s.

As expected, in a hockey market where the spotlight always shines more brightly, the knives are flying. Kessel has been labelled as uncoachable, a coach killer who doesn't work hard enough off the ice and clashes, albeit in a more passive-aggressive way than most, with coaches when he doesn't agree with their methods. Early in the season, several youth hockey coaches told the *Toronto Star* that at a coaching clinic, assistant coach Steve Spott pitched a new breakout system to the Leafs that was quickly scuttled by Kessel. "Spott said, 'Phil hates co aches. He hates Randy. He hates me and I don't even know him yet,' " one of the youth hockey coaches was quoted as saying.

It didn't help Kessel's cause that Ron Wilson broke his silence Jan. 6 and ripped Kessel and the leadership core of the team.





## PHIL KESSEL



### GOOD TIMES

Kessel has a charming, boyish smile when it comes out naturally – on draft day, at the All-Star Game or celebrating a goal. Ex-teammate Joe Colborne says Kessel is a hoot.

"Some of the core players have failed under two or three coaches, so it's got to be the players' fault," Wilson told Brian Hayes and Jeff O'Neill on TSN Radio. "I wouldn't really say that clearly, but you'd have to surmise that some of them might be uncoachable."

Now, that's a lot less definitive than Wilson saying, "Phil Kessel is uncoachable." Kessel has had four coaches in his NHL career, one of them changing because he was traded from Boston to Toronto. That's the same number of coaches Evgeni Malkin and Sidney Crosby have had with the Pittsburgh Penguins and one fewer than Ovechkin has had with the Washington Capitals. Jordan Eberle and Taylor Hall have been in the league four fewer years than Kessel and have been through as many coaches. Kessel has been with the Leafs for two coaching changes, but so have Joffrey Lupul, Tyler Bozak, Dion Phaneuf, Franson, Jake Gardiner, Nazem Kadri and James Reimer. And nobody's labelling them that way.

The worst thing Wilson said about Kessel is something people in hockey already knew, that Kessel goes through bouts of low productivity and sometimes goes missing when he's needed most. He does have an uncanny knack for going cold at the worst times. Despite Kessel taking more shots per game under Horachek than he did under Carlyle, too many of them are of the playing-catch-with-the goalie variety, where he screams down the wing and fires from the periphery. Last season, as the Leafs went down the sinkhole, Kessel had one goal in



the last nine games, and in the *annus horribilis* of 2011-12, he had just one goal in the last eight games.

"Phil's problem, and I think it's pretty much the way he's been his whole career, he's two weeks on and two weeks off," Wilson told TSN Radio. "You can't rely on Phil." The Leafs are fundamentally flawed because they've built their core around Kessel and Phaneuf. One of them wants to make a difference and can't because he's no longer an elite defenseman. The other can score 30 goals falling out of bed in the morning, but doesn't seem to want anything to do with the responsibility, on and off the ice, that comes with being the focal point.

Or as his former NTDP coach Quinn puts it: "I don't know if Phil can be Johnny Carson, but he can be a hell of an Ed McMahon."

So is Kessel uncoachable? Is he a coach killer? Not according to others who have coached him. Carlyle declined to be interviewed for this story, but those who had Kessel before he was in the NHL speak of him in nothing but glowing terms. Even the man who fired Carlyle says Kessel is not a coach killer. "With the number of coaching changes we've had, I would not point to Phil and say that's the reason why it's happened," says Leafs GM David Nonis. "It's been a combination of wanting to change the direction of the team and a lack of team success. And



everyone can take ownership in that."

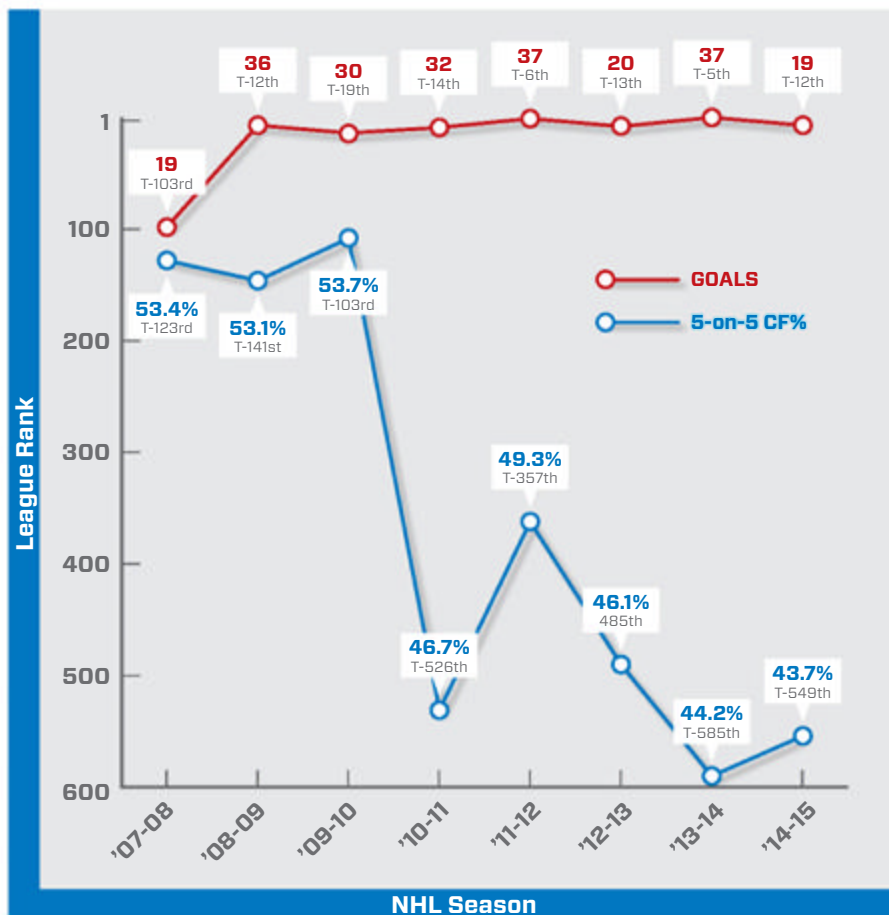
Everyone, management included. The Maple Leafs have made the playoffs once in the past decade, and we all know how that turned out. Their disastrous collapse in Game 7 of the first round against the Bruins in 2013 might have been the worst thing that could have happened to them, because it convinced a lot of people the core of players they had, Kessel included, was destined for greater things. Less than two years later, you have a team in salary cap hell, up against the ceiling with almost no prospects for improvement short of blowing things up. And the Leafs will be active at the trade deadline. Nonis has made it clear to his colleagues that any deal is available, but there's a big difference between being willing to make a deal and actively seeking one.

Chances are, Kessel will still be a Toronto Maple Leaf long after March 2. And somehow, the two sides are going to have to make



## TRENDING DOWN

Phil Kessel has ranked among NHL leaders in goals, but in recent seasons has been among the worst in Corsi For percentage, a strong indication his puck possession game isn't up to snuff.



### SIGNED TO STAY

Kessel chose to remain in Toronto. He could have tested free agency a year ago.

this arrangement work for the long-term. Kessel claims he loves playing in Toronto and gets treated well by the fans here. And if he had wanted to leave the boiling cauldron of scrutiny, he was free to do so after last season and probably could have received the same kind of money on a seven-year deal somewhere else. But he re-upped and went all in with the Leafs, and they with him. So perhaps it might be time to stop harping on Kessel's weaknesses and see what might make it work for both him and the Leafs.

Well, let's start with the players around him. And let's begin with a comparison.

### CROSBY AND KESSEL WERE BORN

56 days and 1,778 miles apart in 1987. Both were sons of former athletes who had never quite made it as pros. Phil Kessel Sr. was drafted in the 10th round of the NFL draft out of Northern Michigan by the Washington Redskins and played nine games as a backup quarterback for the Calgary Stampeders and had a brief stint in the defunct USFL before retiring. Troy Crosby was a middling goalie for the Verdun Jr. Canadiens and was drafted 240th overall, 239 spots after Mario Lemieux, by the Montreal Canadiens in 1984.

Their offspring were both child prodigies. As a 14-year-old with the Madison Capitols bantam team, Kessel scored 176 goals and 286 points in 86 games and became one of the youngest players ever to join USA Hockey's NTDP. At the 2005 world juniors, Quinn was the assistant coach and boldly said of



Kessel, "He's our Sidney Crosby."

Things have not exactly turned out that way. After winning a gold medal at that world juniors, Crosby has gone on to win a Stanley Cup, two scoring titles, two Hart Trophies, a Rocket Richard Trophy and two Olympic gold medals. Kessel has won the Masterton Trophy for his comeback from testicular cancer in his rookie season and was named top forward at the 2014 Sochi Olympics after scoring five goals and eight points in six games, with six of those eight points against Slovakia and Slovenia.

The biggest difference between Kessel and Crosby now is the supporting cast around them, in that Crosby has one and

Carter who now plays in Los Angeles is far different than the one that floundered in Philadelphia. And why is that? Because of the players around him. Carter is the same player, but the circumstances changed.

As Quinn said, Kessel isn't exactly a "secondary player" in the true sense of the word, but he cannot be the heartbeat of your team. The problem is, particularly when there are only so many dollars a team can spend, he has both the cap hit and term of a franchise linchpin. "He's not an alpha male," Quinn says. "And you're born with that. I don't know if you can develop into an alpha male."

## HE'S NOT AN ALPHA MALE. AND YOU'RE BORN WITH THAT. I DON'T KNOW IF YOU CAN DEVELOP INTO AN ALPHA MALE — David Quinn

Kessel does not. Crosby has played nearly his entire career with Malkin to back him, has had good veteran players around with a capable D-corps and decent goaltending. The Maple Leafs, by contrast, haven't had a Norris Trophy winner in their 98-year history and haven't had a legitimate No. 1 or 2 defenseman playing in his prime since Tomas Kaberle. They haven't had a top-20 goalie since Ed Belfour and a legitimate No. 1 center since Mats Sundin. (Ironically, when Sundin played in Toronto, there was constant hue and cry over the fact he didn't have wingers who could complement him, despite the fact he played with the likes of Alex Mogilny, Gary Roberts and Steve Thomas. Now the problem is Kessel doesn't have a center who can bring out the best in him.)

Some teams that have all of those things still can't win the Stanley Cup. But when you have none of them, your chances of having any kind of sustained success are zero. Even the architect of the team admits as much. "If our team was deeper and stronger, would Phil have more success and not have his faults looked at as much?" Nonis says. "No question that would be the case."

Patrick Kane has Jonathan Toews to do much of the on- and off-ice heavy lifting and is surrounded by Norris Trophy-caliber defensemen and veteran leadership. And Mike Modano, another good comparable, was a wildly gifted player in Dallas who couldn't bring the Stars any success as the team's focal point. He only had team success after the Stars brought in veterans such as Joe Nieuwendyk, Guy Carbonneau, Mike Keane, Brett Hull and Pat Verbeek. The Jeff

### YOU LOOK AT KESSEL AND

wonder why he doesn't look more like the chiseled specimens you see in most NHL dressing rooms. Rick Nash, who is having an incredible bounce-back season with the Rangers, looks so much slimmer in the face than he did before this season. Kessel doesn't project the look of a star athlete, which leads people to believe he's lazy and unmotivated and hates the weight room.

Early in his career with the Bruins, Kessel was making his way out of the rink after practice one day when Bruins coach Claude Julien famously said, "Hey Phil, the weight room is that way." That reputation has stuck with Kessel throughout his career. He is one of the few NHLers who doesn't have a dedicated trainer in the off-season and instead spends much of his summer training with the Maple Leafs' strength and conditioning coaches. There are those who claim Kessel can be a beast in the weight room, that the exercises he does to strengthen his wrists for that lethal wrist shot would crush other men. Kessel said in training camp that he skated only about 10 times last summer and spent a month at his place in Florida fishing and relaxing and getting away from hockey. "I won't get into specifics," Nonis says, "but he doesn't test poorly. There are some areas where he's middle of the pack, some where he's at the very top. Some of the tests most teams do, Phil would rank at or near the top because he has some God-given ability and body makeup that you just can't teach. It's not like you're shaking your head at Phil's conditioning. There are some places he can



improve, but there are some places where he's at or near the top of our group."

Matt Nichol, the former Maple Leafs strength and conditioning coach, has built an empire on training top NHL players and worked with a group of players, including Kessel during the most recent lockout. He said Kessel was never the first one in the weight room but was completely open to instruction, respectful and could do squats using as many weight plates as the bar could hold. "He's powerful, a very strong guy," Nichol says. "You could tell that at some point in his life, he put his time in at the gym. He has a lot of horsepower."

Colborne remembers walking into the Leafs weight room at their practice facility one summer day and seeing Kessel in mid-workout. His jaw dropped when he realized how powerful Kessel is. "I saw him do a one-hand clean with 140 pounds," Colborne recalls. "He was throwing the weight around. You look at his legs and they're huge. That's what gives him that explosiveness."

And really, if Kessel were in 10 to 15 percent better shape, how much difference would that really make? Would it make the Leafs goaltending any better? Would it improve their D-corps or make them stronger down the middle of the ice? Quinn jokes that Kessel would be at his stall eating Skittles,



and he would have to get Kessel to join the rest of the team in the weight room, but he had no problems with his conditioning. Former Buffalo Sabres coach Ron Rolston, who coached Kessel with the USA hot-housed under-18 team, says he had no problem dealing with Kessel, either in the weight room or on the ice. "We would do a lot of testing before the season and during the season and he was never in a position where we had to tell him to work harder," Rolston says. "He was always in good shape and played a lot of minutes for us, especially in the key games when we got into international competition. He's not going to be Rod Brind'Amour, but he has a lot of other gifts that are extremely good gifts."

#### **KESSEL MIGHT GIVE OFF THE VIBE**

he doesn't care, but those who know him best maintain a burning competitor lives under the surface, that the constant losing grates on him and that he wants desperately to make the Leafs a winner. Wilson and Jeremy Roenick alluded to the fact that Kessel not only wants to win, but that when things go sideways he gets consumed by it and the harder he tries to

get out of a funk, the further he falls into it.

At the Sochi Games, everything was going great for Kessel and the American team to start the tournament. They were scoring goals, and the line of Joe Pavelski between Kessel and James van Riemsdyk was the talk of the tournament. There was grumbling about Kessel when things began to slide for the American team, one that failed to score against Canada and Finland in the semifinal

#### **POWER BUTTON**

It's Kessel's bursts of speed and strong wrists that set him apart from other NHL stars.

tered most – a reputation that has followed him much of his career – he had a lot of company among his teammates in Sochi. As far as being difficult to coach, the man behind the U.S. bench has nothing but good things

## **KESSEL WAS 100-PERCENT COACHABLE. THE GUY WANTED TO WIN IN THE WORST WAY** – Dan Bylsma

and the bronze-medal games, respectively. In the four games against the hockey powers – Czech Republic, Canada, Russia and Finland – Kessel had just one goal and two points. But Zach Parise had only one goal, Patrick Kane only two assists, T.J. Oshie just one goal. Pavelski and van Riemsdyk had the same scoring line as Kessel.

If Kessel failed to come up when it mat-

to say about Kessel. "Phil had only one goal in mind, and he was ready to do whatever he had to do to help us win," says Dan Bylsma. "He was 100-percent coachable and ready to do whatever it took. This guy wanted to win, wanted to win in the worst way. I didn't see any of that (being uncoachable) in Phil."

At the University of Minnesota, Lucia had Kessel during the player's draft year.



Kessel was only 17 when he showed up on campus and was a "true freshman" in college, playing against players in their 20s in a top Div. I league. And he dominated, scoring 51 points in 39 games and finishing second on the team in scoring. When he returned to watch his sister, Amanda, play during the lockout, Lucia said he stopped in at the coach's office and Lucia noticed a much more mature, engaging person. The shy kid from Wisconsin had grown into a man, and the two had a 45-minute conversation. Lucia is among the coaches Kessel had who saw nothing of the Kessel that is being portrayed now. "Phil came and he worked," Lucia says. "He worked in the weight room, he worked on the ice, he wanted to get better, he was driven. That's the player that I saw."



## AMERICAN DREAM

Phil Kessel ranks high among U.S.-born players in goal-scoring before the age of 28. He'll need to maintain that pace to crack the top five.

PLAYER NAME	GOALS BEFORE 28	GAMES PLAYED BEFORE 28	CAREER GOALS
Pat LaFontaine	386	671	468
Jeremy Roenick	296	596	513
Keith Tkachuk	294	576	538
Mike Modano	277	633	561
Ed Olczyk	263	718	342
<b>PHIL KESSEL</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>638</b>	<b>242</b>
Tony Amonte	203	533	416
John LeClair	175	425	406
Scott Young	134	446	342
Joe Mullen	123	253	502
Bill Guerin	121	420	429

### FULL EFFORT

Kessel doesn't buy the two-weeks-on-two-weeks-off knock: "I'm trying every night, you know?"

**B**ACK AT THE ALL-STAR festivities, Kessel is riffing on everything from the television shows he watches – *The Mentalist* and *American Pickers* are two of his favorites – to his affection for the late Bob Suter, the Miracle on Ice hero and father of Ryan Suter of the Minnesota Wild. Bob Suter coached Kessel from the time he was seven until he was 14. If Bob Suter were alive, he'd probably gush about Kessel, too. There were times when Kessel wanted to quit playing hockey, but Suter pushed him and shaped him into the player and person he has become. "I have stories that if I told, people would be like, no way, right?" Kessel says. "They wouldn't get away with that today, you know? He pushed you and he made you better, right? As a kid, he wanted what was best for you."

When it comes to hockey, Kessel admits he's gone cold at an inopportune time, but points out factors beyond his control. "There's a goalie, too, you have to score on, right?" he says. "They're the best in the world. It's not easy to score on those guys."

When it comes to perception, Kessel says he wants people to know one thing: he cares. Even though he says he doesn't listen to talk radio or read newspapers, he knows what is said about him. Kessel knew exactly what he was getting into by signing with the Maple Leafs for eight more years, and with that kind of compensation comes expectation. When they're not met, criticism closely follows. "I'm trying every night, you know?" he says. "I'm going out there and playing hard for the guys every night, giving my all. I do try no matter what anyone...I'm out there giving 100 percent of what I have, and some nights are better than others."

TARA WALTON/2014 TORONTO STAR

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# FRANCIS COMES FULL CIRCLE

The Hall of Famer finds himself on the other end of the trade table nearly 25 years after he was dealt as a star center

BY MIKE BROPHY

**R**ON FRANCIS PONDERES THE QUESTION before offering a “safe” answer.

“Did the Hartford Whalers make a mistake trading you March 4, 1991?”

The correct answer is a resounding, “Yes!” Of course it was a mistake trading Francis along with defensemen Ulf Samuelsson and Grant Jennings to the Pittsburgh Penguins for forwards John Cullen and Jeff Parker and defenseman Zarley Zalapski. The Penguins immediately went on a two Stanley Cup run. “It’s not for me to debate,” said Francis, GM and executive vice-president of the Carolina Hurricanes. “I can tell you that I loved playing in Hartford. I grew up there. I started playing there when I was 18 and got traded about 10 years later. From a hockey standpoint, it certainly worked out for me. You win two Cups and have a lot of success in

Pittsburgh, so it’s hard to complain about the move.”

The reason the question about the trade is relevant all these years later is because Francis is now charged with plotting the future of the Hurricanes, formerly the Whalers, and there is plenty of buzz that Carolina’s captain and best player, Eric Staal, could be on the move.

At 30, Staal has been slowed by nagging injuries the past few years and hasn’t been as productive as he was early in his career when he was considered one of the best two-way centers in the NHL. Still, the belief is he could fetch a bundle for a team that has been spiraling downward the past few years. The Hurricanes have missed the playoffs the past five seasons and seven of the past eight.

## BACK-TO-BACK

Just 15 months after arriving from Hartford, Ron Francis was a two-time Cup champion.

**D**INNER WAS OVER AND RON FRANCIS AND his wife, Mary Lou, were busy clearing the dishes. His parents were anxious to visit Hartford to see Ron and Mary Lou's first child, daughter Kaitlyn, but Ron's future with the organization was up in the air, and he told his folks to hold off.

Francis has been stripped of his captaincy earlier in the 1990-91 season, and talks for a new contract were going nowhere. Now he was being mentioned as trade bait.

However, Whalers GM Eddie Johnston assured Francis he wasn't going anywhere, so his parents made the trip to Hartford. "A week or 10 days before the trade deadline, they wanted to sign me because they were happy with me," Francis said. "I said, 'Let's wait until after the trade deadline to do the new contract.' And my agent was told I would not be traded. At that point, I thought I was staying."

The Penguins, meanwhile, had some serious Stanley Cup aspirations. They'd signed veteran right winger Joey Mullen and center Bryan Trottier in the off-season and had traded for veterans Gordie Roberts, Larry Murphy, Peter Taglianetti and Scott Young before pulling the trigger on the massive Francis-Samuelsson-Jennings deal.

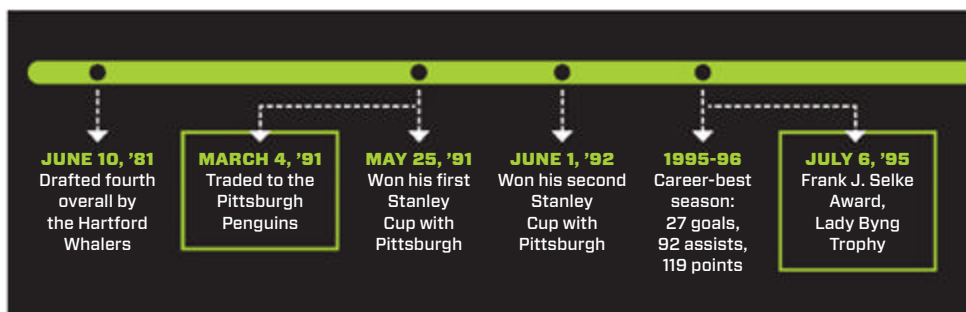
Upon receiving the news of the trade just three days after his 28th birthday, Francis said he went through the usual gamut of emotions: from being hurt and disappointed that the Whalers no longer valued him, to being excited about joining a new team that viewed him as a critical piece of the puzzle on a potential championship squad. This is a team that already had the likes of Mark Recchi, Paul Coffey, Kevin Stevens, Jaromir Jagr, Tom Barrasso, Bob Errey and, of course, Mario Lemieux (though he missed most of 1990-91 with a back injury) before acquiring Francis. "He was such a professional," Errey said. "The way he spoke and the way he managed his game were very professional. If you needed a goal, he'd get you a goal. If you needed a shutdown guy, he could do that. If you needed a big faceoff win or blocked shot, he'd do that, too. He wasn't a guy who had blazing speed, but at the end of the day, he got the job done."

"Even as a player, he carried himself on and off the ice like he was a manager. He seemed to put a lot of thought into everything he did."

Playing for a new team – a team with a chance to win – breathed new life into Francis's career. Of course, there was that little matter of where he fit in on the depth chart. Francis was a No. 1 center, but suddenly found himself on a team that included Lemieux. "I remember the first or second day I get called into the office by coach Bob Johnson and he sat me down and asked how I was doing," Francis said. "I said, 'Great.' He



## EVEN AS A PLAYER, RON CARRIED HIMSELF ON AND OFF THE ICE LIKE HE WAS A MANAGER – Bob Errey



said, 'I want to let you know we have this kid here, and his name is Mario Lemieux.' I said, 'Yeah, I know.' He said, 'I just want to let you know he's our No. 1 center.' I laughed and said, 'Bob, I'm fine with that. I just want to win. I'm here to help this team win.' That year my line was Kevin Stevens on left wing and Joey Mullen on right wing – a pretty good second line in my eyes. The next year I played with Jaromir Jagr and Joey Mullen, so it was obviously a very deep team."

Francis enjoyed seven-plus fruitful seasons in Pittsburgh before returning to the franchise that drafted him fourth overall in 1981. The Whalers relocated to Carolina in 1997-98, and Francis spent six seasons with the Hurricanes before concluding his 23-year career with a forgettable stop in Toronto with the Maple Leafs.

**F**RANCIS SCORED 549 GOALS AND HAD 1,798 points in 1,731 career games and was elected to the Hockey Hall of Fame in 2007. Having earned about \$40 million in his career, it would have been easy for him to ride off into the sunset and take it easy through his golden years.

But like many former high-profile NHLers these days, Francis longed to stay in the game. The feeling of elation he felt jumping over the boards in Minnesota after the Penguins won the Stanley Cup in 1991 has never left him. "For me, it is my love for the game," Francis said. "The game has been really good to me. It is what I have done my whole life so to stay in it and continue to be a part of it is fantastic. I love coming to work every day."

Francis, 51, wasn't handed a top job in the



Hurricanes organization. On the contrary, when he expressed an interest in learning the ropes to Carolina GM Jim Rutherford, he was informed the pay was paltry. "I told Jim it's not about the money and he said, 'OK then, I can pay you \$35,000,'" Francis said. "That's what I started for. It really wasn't about the money at that point. I wanted to learn the business and be a part of it, if I was going to put the time and effort in I wanted it to be a good learning experience."

Rutherford said it wasn't the budget that dictated Francis's salary. "All the former players that come in and work for me start off at a low salary," Rutherford said. "For me it is a test of how bad the person wants to get into the front office and into the game. As a player you come to the rink and work your four or five hours and then you leave. If you work in the front office you put in way more hours. Ron worked at all aspects of the game from player development, scouting, doing contracts. He was never in a hurry to get to where he is today and because of that he is very well prepared."

Francis joined the likes of Joe Sakic, Steve Yzerman, Brendan Shanahan, Cam Neely, Patrick Roy and Ron Hextall who have chosen to stay in the game despite having earned millions of dollars in their playing careers.



### UPWARD TRAJECTORY

Francis was honored, then hired for the front office, in 2006. Eight years later he was GM.

the Hurricanes is probably the same as the 29 other GM's and their teams. "I like a team that is smart, that skates well and competes hard every night," Francis said. "And there are other pieces that have to be included.

**JULY 13, '98**  
Signed as a free agent by the Carolina Hurricanes

**MARCH 9, '04**  
Traded to Toronto

**SEPT. 14, '05**  
Announces retirement

**NOV. 3, '06**  
Rejoins Carolina as director of player development

**OCT. 4, '07**  
Promoted to assistant GM

**NOV. 12, '07**  
Inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame

**DEC. 3, '08**  
Made associate coach, while being director of player development

**JUNE 7, '12**  
Named director of hockey operations

**APRIL 28, '14**  
Named eighth GM in Hurricanes history

**W**HEN THE WHALERS MOVED TO CAROLINA and became the Hurricanes, Rutherford felt his club lacked leadership. So even though Francis was 35, he brought him home to teach the younger players in the organization how to be professionals.

At the time, the GM did not think he was bringing back the man who would eventually take his job, but as time wore on, and as Francis showed more and more interest in learning how to manage the franchise, it became clear what lied ahead. "Once we got to the end of his career and I knew he was coming on board in the front office, I didn't know if I'd be the one who had the say in Ron becoming the GM or if it would be the owner, but it was certainly in my mind that he would be the guy who would take my

position," Rutherford said. "He is strong mentally and he knows the game. He will do extremely well."

After taking over as GM, Francis had hoped to see a quick improvement in his team, but he's been hogtied by injuries. Center Jordan Staal missed the first 35 games with a broken leg, while other members of the Hurricanes have been out of the lineup for various periods due to injury: Eric Staal (five games), Nathan Gerbe (four), Patrick Dwyer (six), Brett Bellemore (eight) and Jeff Skinner (four).

Since the lineup has been intact, the Hurricanes have played significantly better. Francis said he'll take a few weeks to get a feel for the group's upside before making any decisions to alter the lineup. As for what he expects from his team, Francis's vision of

You can't just have all skilled players; you've got to have guys that play certain roles. We want a team that competes and battles hard every night."

Which brings us back to Eric Staal. Francis finds himself in pretty much the same boat Eddie Johnston was in back in 1991. Does he trade his star?

"There are some similarities, but there are differences, too," Francis said. "I did not have a no-move clause in my contract, for starters. I think it is important when you build a team to have good players, obviously, but to also have good character guys who can lead your young players and Eric certainly fits into that category. We'll see where things go, but at this point there is nothing on the horizon that would indicate we are trying to trade him." **THE**

# TRADING POST



Let the wheelin' and dealin' begin! Here are the 10 big-time players most likely to find new NHL homes by March 2

BY ADAM PROTEAU







## RYAN O'REILLY

Colorado  
Avalanche

**CENTER**

Although some think O'Reilly, 24, could make the jump to become a bona fide No. 1 center, many pro scouts view him more as a tremendous second-line pivot. He's a solid two-way forward with exceptional discipline (he had just two penalty minutes in 80 games last season), and he's not a rental, with one season left on a two-year, \$12-million contract. The Avs need a young defenseman in return, which is why a deal for Buffalo's Tyler Myers makes sense. It's more a matter of when he's traded, not if.

Contract status

**1 year @ \$6M**

Good fit for...

**ARI, BUF, FLA,  
MTL, WPG**

Chance of trade



## KEITH YANDLE

Arizona  
Coyotes

**DEFENSE**

Arizona is bottoming out and facing what GM Don Maloney called a "reset" of the roster. So with Yandle, 28, finishing up his five-year contract at the end of 2015-16, it could be time for him and the Coyotes to part ways. His consistency on the back end and lengthy panic threshold in big minutes (an average of more than 24 minutes this season) will put him at the top of the list of available D-men, and there will be no shortage of suitors. His next contract will be pricey, but the elite puckmover's skills are worth it.

Contract status

**1 year @ \$5.3M**

Good fit for...

**BOS, COL,  
DAL, DET**

Chance of trade



## MIKE GREEN

Washington  
Capitals

**DEFENSE**

The off-season signings of Matt Niiskanen and Brooks Orpik, and the ascent of young 'D' John Carlson and Karl Alzner, have made Green, 29, expendable. He's no longer the player who averaged more than 25 minutes a game for Washington in 2008-09, but he's still an above-average contributor on offense and a power play force. And, perhaps most intriguingly in the eyes of inquiring GMs, he's a right-handed shot. That's a valuable commodity, and he can be acquired with the long or short term in mind.

Contract status

**2015 UFA**

Good fit for...

**ANA, COL,  
DET, MTL**

Chance of trade



## JOFFREY LUPUL

Toronto  
Maple Leafs

**RIGHT WING**

At 31, Lupul has sustained more than his share of injuries. He's already missed more than a dozen games this season and hasn't played 70 games or more in a season since 2008-09. But when healthy, there's no doubt Lupul can still produce (nine goals and 17 points in 28 games this year). He's got three seasons left on his deal after, so if Toronto is motivated to move his money off the books as the franchise rebuilds, the Leafs will have to lower their expectations on the return or assume some of his salary.

Contract status

**3 yrs @ \$5.3M**

Good fit for...

**LA, STL,  
SJ**

Chance of trade



## ANTOINE VERMETTE

Arizona  
Coyotes

**CENTER**

Easily the most talked-about player at this season's deadline, Vermette, 32, is versatile, a responsible presence at both ends of the ice and almost always produces 20 to 25 goals. The interest will allow GM Don Maloney to drive up the asking price to the point no less than a first-round pick and a better-than-average prospect will suffice. That's fair value for a player who can be a difference-maker on faceoffs and who plays on both special teams. That's the kind of player who helps you win playoff games.

Contract status

**2015 UFA**

Good fit for...

**ANA, BOS, CHI,  
MTL, NYR, STL**

Chance of trade





## TYLER MYERS

Buffalo Sabres

### DEFENSE

The 25-year-old Myers has experienced major highs and severe lows in his NHL career, but he's now one of the more sought-after defensemen on the market. He's logged an average of more than 25 minutes a night on the moribund Sabres, showing he's capable of playing up to 30 minutes. He's a cost-certain player for the next four seasons, and if the salary cap rises, he'll be a bargain. Any team that acquires him will need to surrender both young talent and high picks. The Sabres won't accept anything less.

#### Contract status

**4 yrs @ \$5.5M**

#### Good fit for...

**ANA, COL, DET, EDM, FLA, PHI**

#### Chance of trade



## CODY FRANSON

Toronto Maple Leafs

### DEFENSE

GM Dave Nonis doesn't have much cap space to play with to re-sign the 27-year-old, and as a coveted right-shot defenseman, Franson would be a fool to take a hometown discount to play on a team that's going to be rebuilding over the next half-decade. The much smarter move for both is for the Leafs to take advantage of the large number of teams looking for a player such as Franson and start a bidding war for him. He's a solid top-four D-man and will land Toronto at least a second-round pick and a prospect.

#### Contract status

**2015 UFA**

#### Good fit for...

**ANA, COL, DET, DAL, LA, SJ**

#### Chance of trade



## JAROMIR JAGR

New Jersey Devils

### RIGHT WING

At 43, Jagr is still getting it done on NHL rinks (10 goals and 27 points in 47 games for New Jersey) and no doubt wants another shot at a Stanley Cup. Devils GM Lou Lamoriello won't want Jagr to walk away for nothing as a UFA, but we'll see if he prefers to trade him out of the Eastern Conference rather than send him to a natural rival like the Isles (who could use his poise and experience) or the Penguins (Jagr's former team). Jagr can still thrive on the power play and, with the right matchups, at even strength.

#### Contract status

**2015 UFA**

#### Good fit for...

**BOS, MTL, NYI, PIT**

#### Chance of trade



## CHRIS STEWART

Buffalo Sabres

### RIGHT WING

A team in need of size and soft hands will see Stewart, 27, as a more affordable trade option than Vermette. The upside to acquiring him is that, once he does get out of the Sabres' abysmal competitive situation, he should be more than happy to produce for his new team. He'd be a stellar second-unit addition to any Cup contender's power play and isn't likely to cost a GM a high pick or an elite prospect. If a trade partner sweetens the pot, Buffalo might assume some of Stewart's prorated \$4.2-million salary.

#### Contract status

**2015 UFA**

#### Good fit for...

**BOS, CHI, NYI, OTT, PIT, WPG**

#### Chance of trade



## JEFF PETRY

Edmonton Oilers

### DEFENSE

Petry is far from a household name, but he's a favorite of the analytics crowd – his relative Corsi percentage ranks with all-star caliber blueliners – and being a right shot makes him attractive to suitors. He can skate with anyone, make a crisp first pass out of his zone and play solid special teams minutes. He's no star, but he's only 27 and will surely get a raise on his \$3.1-million cap hit. A contender like the Pens or Ducks may see him as a rental, but others (Colorado, Dallas) would be interested in a long-term match.

#### Contract status

**2015 UFA**

#### Good fit for...

**ANA, COL, DAL, DET, PIT**

#### Chance of trade



MYERS: BILL WIPPERT/NHLI VIA GETTY IMAGES; FRANSON+STEWART: GRAIG ABEL/NHLI VIA GETTY IMAGES; PETRY: ANDY DEVLIN/NHLI VIA GETTY IMAGES; JAGR: JEFF VINNICK/NHLI VIA GETTY IMAGES



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ORIGINAL





ERIC STAAL

# EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Who buys, who sells and who isn't sure? We break down every franchise's needs and assets approaching the trade deadline

BY MATT LARKIN



BUYER



SELLER



ON THE FENCE

CAP SPACE, IN MILLIONS, ACCORDING TO NHLNUMBERS.COM AS OF FEB. 3, 2015

TEAM		CAP SPACE
ANAHEIM		\$5.4
ARIZONA		\$10.7
BOSTON		\$2.2
BUFFALO		\$10.3
CALGARY		\$12.7
CAROLINA		\$4.0
CHICAGO		\$0.8
COLORADO		\$1.6
COLUMBUS		\$5.5
DALLAS		\$4.1
DETROIT		\$1.7
EDMONTON		\$5.5
FLORIDA		\$3.0
LOS ANGELES		\$2.9
MINNESOTA		\$6.9
MONTREAL		\$1.2
NASHVILLE		\$11.0
NEW JERSEY		\$3.0
NY ISLANDERS		\$5.5
NY RANGERS		\$1.5
OTTAWA		\$12.9
PHILADELPHIA		\$2.1
PITTSBURGH		\$0.4
ST. LOUIS		\$1.0
SAN JOSE		\$5.6
TAMPA BAY		\$2.6
TORONTO		\$1.0
VANCOUVER		\$1.4
WASHINGTON		\$2.5
WINNIPEG		\$6.8



NEEDS	AVAILABILITY	2015 PROMINENT UFAs
A big, mobile D-man and – dare to dream – a scoring winger to play with Ryan Getzlaf and Corey Perry.	Stocked with prospects, from Shea Theodore to Nick Ritchie. Matt Beleskey may be shopped.	M. Beleskey (LW), D. Heatley (LW), S. Souray (D), F. Beauchemin (D), E. Brewer (D), I. Bryzgalov (G)
Pillars to build around. The Coyotes are ready to sell their veterans and start a rebuild from scratch.	Antoine Vermette the most likely trade candidate in the entire NHL. Keith Yandle is being shopped.	M. Erat (RW), A. Vermette (C), B. Crombeen (RW), D. Moss (RW), Z. Michalek (D)
A pure scoring forward to aid Bruins' power play. A two-way defenseman for the top six would be nice.	Bruins can spare picks as a win-now team. They're also rumored to be selling Loui Eriksson.	G. Campbell (C), D. Paille (LW), C. Soderberg (C), A. McQuaid (D), M. Bartkowski (D)
Still bad enough to seek out any value they can get at any position, not to mention high draft picks.	Many vets will pop up on the block, most notably enigmatic power forward Chris Stewart.	C. Stewart (RW), D. Stafford (RW), A. Meszaros (D), A. Benoit (D), J. Enroth (G), M. Neuvirth (G)
A natural right winger and rugged defenseman. They've pondered Kings castoff Mike Richards.	With oodles of cap space, Flames can acquire an expensive player to help a cash-strapped team.	C. Glencross (LW), D. Setoguchi (RW), B. McGrattan (RW), R. Diaz (D), K. Ramo (G)
Rebuilding Canes need draft picks, and blueline prospects would be welcome in any deals, too.	Eric Staal the prized chip but under contract one more season at \$8.3M. Much easier sell next year.	J. Tlustý (LW), J. McClement (C), P. Dwyer (RW), A. Sekera (D), T. Gleason (D), B. Bellemore (D)
Never say never, but Blackhawks have no cap wiggle room and will not be major deadline players.	Very little. Playing for a Cup, they need their pending UFAs. They also don't have a prospect surplus.	B. Richards (C), D. Carcillo (LW), J. Oduya (D), M. Rozsival (D)
A big-ticket defenseman, likely at the cost of a big-ticket forward such as Ryan O'Reilly.	Avs are on playoff bubble but could sell off a pending UFA like Danny Briere, who just isn't a fit in Colorado.	D. Briere (RW), J. Hejda (D), R. Wilson (D)
Draft picks would suffice. Jackets have faith in their future. Injury-riddled season is just bad luck.	Depth forwards Cam Atkinson and Matt Calvert could be moved. Veteran 'D' Jordan Leopold, too.	M. Letestu (C), J. Skille (RW), B. Gibbons (RW), C. McElhinney (G)
A top-four or even a top-two defenseman. Stars haven't settled on a first-line right winger, either.	Hard-pressed to make playoffs and won't mortgage an elite prospect. Would love to offload Ales Hemsky.	S. Horcoff (C), R. Peverley (C), E. Cole (RW), P. Eaves (RW), D. Schlenger (D), A. Lindback (G)
Even with young D-men emerging, Wings need a veteran minutes eater who generates offense.	Landing D-man likely means giving a young one up. Xavier Ouellet and Ryan Sproul come to mind.	D. Cleary (RW), J. Gustavsson (G)
A total reset. It starts with a good young goalie, and the Oil need size and snarl at forward and on 'D'.	No one is safe. Jeff Petry is good as gone. Oil will even get calls on stars. Can anyone pry Taylor Hall away?	D. Roy (C), R. Klinkhammer (LW), J. Petry (D), V. Fasth (G)
Offense. If Panthers decide to push for playoffs, they must bolster their horrible power play.	Table is set if Panthers sell. They have several UFA forward rentals to fill out contenders' bottom sixes.	T. Fleischmann (LW), S. Upshall (LW), S. Bergenheim (LW), T. Kopecky (RW)
Kings have aggressively pursued top-four blueliners to replace Slava Voynov. Expect a deal to happen.	They likely won't budge on Tyler Toffoli or Tanner Pearson but can offer less-developed prospects.	J. Williams (RW), J. Stoll (C), R. Regehr (D), J. McBain (D)
Winners with big-game experience to help Wild's playoff push. A top-six winger and physical D-man.	Wild have attractive prospects, i.e. Alex Tuch, should they go for it. More likely to stand pat, though.	K. Brodzia (C), R. Carter (C), K. Ballard (D), N. Prosser (D), J. Harding (G), D. Dubnyk (G)
Depth on defense. After P.K. Subban and Andrei Markov, rest of 'D' are too young or too old to trust.	Habs have several forwards and D-men on the verge of NHL-readiness. Ideal targets for sellers.	M. Malhotra (C), S. Gonchar (D), M. Weaver (D), B. Allen (D)
A veteran scoring forward to round out the top six. That said, Preds lineup already quite balanced.	Preds don't want to lose prospects. But GM David Poile has made big moves at deadline before.	M. Fisher (C), M. Cullen (C), O. Jokinen (C), M. Ribeiro (C), A. Volchenkov (D)
Devils all but out of playoff race, so they'll seek picks and prospects. They need young scoring forwards.	Few teams have as many quality veteran UFAs to sell off. GM Lou Lamoriello can hold a fire sale.	J. Jagr (RW), M. Ryder (RW), M. Havlat (LW), S. Gomez (C), M. Zidlicky (D), B. Salvador (D)
Kyle Okposo's injury revealed to be a detached retina, so Isles will seek a top-six right winger.	GM Garth Snow won't want to deal prospects Griffin Reinhart or Ryan Pulock, but they'd yield big return.	L. Visnovsky (D), J. Boychuk (D), M. Carkner (D)
A reliable top-six defenseman to fill void left by Anton Stralman's departure in free agency.	Young D-man John Moore likely to be dealt. He's an RFA and Rangers won't want to pay him in arbitration.	M. St-Louis (RW), M. Zuccarello (RW), L. Stempniak (RW), M. Hunwick (D)
Sens were linked to veteran center Vermette, but why buy when they're way out of playoff race?	Big decision to make on UFA Marc Methot. If they don't re-sign him, he can fetch a nice return.	E. Condra (RW), M. Methot (D)
A young, mobile defenseman. Flyer defense corps has size, but it's among the league's slowest.	Would love to dump Vincent Lecavalier. Willing to move Braydon Coburn and Nicklas Grossmann, too.	K. Timonen (D), N. Schultz (D), C. Colaiacovo (D), R. Emery (G)
Pens always rent wingers and have been linked to Jagr. Could use 'D' to replace injured Olli Maatta, too.	To acquire 'D' help, Pittsburgh may have to move one out to clear cap space. Paul Martin? Rob Scuderi?	S. Downie (RW), B. Comeau (LW), M. Lapierre (C), P. Martin (D), C. Ehrhoff (D), T. Greiss (G)
If Kevin Shattenkirk's recovery from abdominal surgery goes slowly, Blues need an offensive D-man.	Blues are as deep as any team in the NHL at forward and can spare one, be it a roster player or prospect.	J. Lindstrom (C), M. Goc (C), V. Sobotka (C), B. Jackman (D), C. Butler (D)
Sharks would like more offense from their defense. A UFA-to-be like Mike Green makes sense to target.	Sharks can offer a checking forward in a "hockey trade" or sell picks if they're really making a Cup run.	T. Kennedy (RW), A. Desjardins (C), J. Sheppard (LW), M. Irwin (D), S. Hannan (D), A. Niemi (G)
Injuries to Radko Gudas and Matt Carle devastated blueline. Contending Bolts are ripe to rent a D-man.	Lightning won't want to mess with their core too much. They'll have to dangle picks and prospects.	B. Morrow (LW), E. Nabokov (G)
Leafs need a big No. 1 center to rebuild around. Likely won't get one at deadline. Can settle for picks.	Pending UFA Cody Franson a hot commodity. Daniel Winnik and Mike Santorelli are solid, cheap rentals.	M. Santorelli (C), D. Winnik (LW), D. Booth (LW), C. Franson (D), K. Holzer (D)
A secondary scoring forward to complement Sedin line and a rearguard to replace injured Kevin Bieksa.	Canucks' sudden glut of goaltenders makes one of Eddie Lack and Jacob Markstrom available.	S. Matthias (C), D. Dorsett (RW), B. Richardson (C)
Caps could use a top-six forward if they go full-buyer. Otherwise: picks or blueline prospects.	It's all about Mike Green. Pending UFA wants to stay, but Caps can't afford him and will surely trade him.	J. Ward (RW), E. Fehr (RW), J. Beagle (RW), M. Green (D), J. Erskine (D), J. Hillen (D)
A center for the top nine. Adam Lowry and Jim Slater don't cut it. Jets are among best fits for Vermette.	Jets finally have great farm system and shouldn't dismantle it. Can deal future picks if they are buyers.	M. Frolik (RW), J. Slater (C), T. Galiardi (LW), M. Halischuk (RW), A. Pardy (D)

# TRADE DEADLINE REWIND

If hindsight is 20/20, then some teams must have made these deals in the dark, given how badly they turned out

BY ADAM PROTEAU



## AVALANCHE ACQUIRE

Ray Bourque  
Dave Andreychuk



## BRUINS ACQUIRE

Brian Rolston  
Sammy Pahlsson  
Martin Grenier  
2000 1st-rounder  
(Martin Samuelsson)



**THE BREAKDOWN:** Given the dedication to the franchise Bourque showed in his service to the Bruins over 21 seasons, the magnitude of the star blueliner and longest-serving captain in team history being dealt to Colorado in 2000 can't be overstated even now. Neither can the fact the Bruins lost out on this trade about as badly as a team can when trading an icon.

The Avalanche weren't Bourque's first choice. After Boston sunk to the bottom of the Northeast Division, he requested a trade, preferably to an East Coast team. But 10 days before the March 16 trade deadline, Bruins GM Harry Sinden went with what he thought was the best return for Bourque and veteran winger Dave Andreychuk, and it came from Colorado: forward Brian Rolston (who'd already been traded from New Jersey to the Avs earlier that season); then-23-year-old center Samuel Pahlsson (finishing up his final year in his native Sweden); defensive prospect Martin Grenier; and a first-round pick in 2000 or 2001, (the choice Boston's, and the Bruins took Swedish winger Martin Samuelsson 27th overall in 2000 with it).

The deal didn't immediately pay championship dividends for Bourque and the Avalanche, though they did make it to Game 7 of the Western Conference final in 2000 before losing to the eventual-champion Dallas Stars. Bourque had eight assists and nine points in 13 post-season games that year, but at 39 he could've retired or signed with a different team as an unrestricted free agent. However, he re-signed for one final season, and after posting his best regular season numbers in five years, Bourque was instrumental in Colorado's second Cup win.

Andreychuk wasn't part of that Cup-winning squad, having moved on at the end of 1999-00. But even if you only count Bourque's 94 regular season games and 34 playoff games as Colorado's bounty in the trade, it beats what Boston got: Rolston played four strong years for the Bruins but left for nothing in 2004 as a UFA; Pahlsson played only 17 games for Boston before being shipped to Anaheim for Andrei Nazarov and Patrick Traverse; Grenier never played for the Bruins; and Samuelsson appeared in just 14 games with the team.

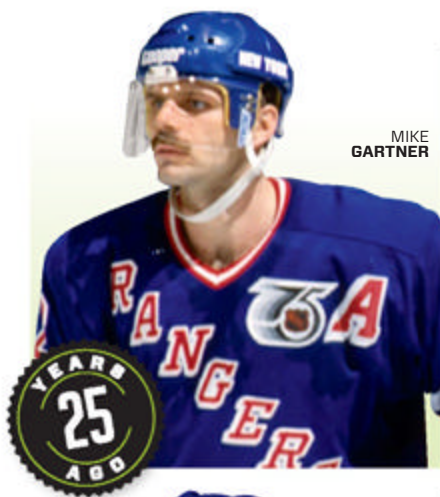
**LONG-TERM WINNER: COLORADO**



RAY  
BOURQUE

STEVE BABINEAU/NHL VIA GETTY IMAGES





MIKE GARTNER



**RANGERS ACQUIRE**  
Mike Gartner



**NORTH STARS ACQUIRE**  
Ulf Dahlen  
1990 4th-rounder  
(Cal McCowan)  
1991 4th-rounder  
(Alexei Zhitnik)



**THE BREAKDOWN:** After a decade in Washington, Gartner hadn't played a full season with the North Stars before being traded on deadline day 1990 for a package that included then-23-year-old Dahlen and two draft picks – the better of which (Zhitnik) was flipped to L.A. for two years of Todd Elik. Dahlen blossomed, scoring 92 goals in three seasons. But Gartner peeled off three straight seasons of at least 40 goals, playing a big role in two playoff runs before he was dealt to Toronto for Glenn Anderson a few months before the Blueshirts' 1994 Cup win.

**LONG-TERM WINNER: RANGERS**



PIERRE TURGEON



**CANADIENS ACQUIRE**  
Vladimir Malakhov  
Pierre Turgeon



**ISLANDERS ACQUIRE**  
Kirk Muller  
Mathieu Schneider  
Craig Darby



**THE BREAKDOWN:** Montreal was only two years removed from a Stanley Cup but well out of the playoffs when GM Serge Savard pulled the trigger on a blockbuster in 1995: he moved Muller and Schneider to Long Island for Malakhov and Turgeon, who was then dealt to St. Louis in 1996 in a multi-player deal to bring Shayne Corson back for a second stint with the Habs. Savard was fired early in 1995-96, but considering Muller and Schneider were dealt by the Isles before the end of that campaign, this trade was a win for the Canadiens.

**LONG-TERM WINNER: MONTREAL**



PAUL STASTNY



**AVALANCHE ACQUIRE**  
Chris Gratton  
Ossi Vaananen  
2005 2nd-rounder  
(Paul Stastny)

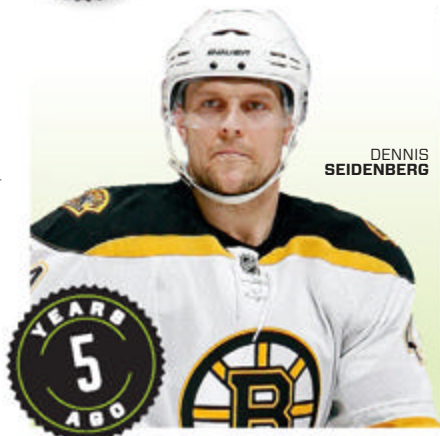


**COYOTES ACQUIRE**  
Keith Ballard  
Derek Morris



**THE BREAKDOWN:** Arizona made this deal the day before the 2004 trade deadline. In hindsight, GM Mike Barnett should've waited the extra day and reconsidered. Ballard and Morris were staples on 'D,' but neither was around when the Coyotes made the playoffs in 2010 for the first time since 2002. On the other hand, despite forward Gratton leaving Colorado at season's end and Vaananen giving them solid work on the blueline, the decisive point is the second-rounder that became Stastny. He's an ex-Av now, but he was the best player in this swap.

**LONG-TERM WINNER: COLORADO**



DENNIS SEIDENBERG



**BRUINS ACQUIRE**  
Dennis Seidenberg  
Matt Bartkowski



**PANTHERS ACQUIRE**  
Byron Bitz  
Craig Weller  
2010 2nd-rounder  
(Alex Petrovic)



**THE BREAKDOWN:** This looks to have been a badly bungled deal by Panthers management. Seidenberg spent less than a full season in Florida before GM Randy Sexton shipped him and Bartkowski to Boston where Seidenberg was a key component in the Bruins' 2010-11 championship run. Bitz skated in seven games for Florida and only played another 10 NHL games after that, while Weller never played any. Petrovic projects to be an NHLer, but he'll have to be exceptionally good to make this 2010 deal even close to a wash.

**LONG-TERM WINNER: BOSTON**



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# CLICHÉS FOR DOLLARS

Players, coaches and GMs are comically predictable this time of the year. Get your dabbers ready



JAY BOUWMEESTER

**I**T'S TIME FOR THE NHL TRADE DEADLINE, WHICH MEANS IT'S time for a torrent of clichés from players and team brass. So this year, why not have some fun with it? Print out this handy NHL Trade Deadline Cliché Bingo Card and by the time March 2 rolls around, it shouldn't take you long to complete it – especially if you watch one of the Jedi masters of cliché, such as Blues defenseman and amateur verbal anesthesiologist Jay Bouwmeester, go to work in front of a microphone:

B I N G O				
"We see this as a trade that really benefits both teams."	"You hear some of the rumors, but you're never really prepared for a day like today when it finally comes."	"This is going to be good for my career. A fresh start is probably the best thing for me, I think."	"We have the best fans in the world and we owe it to them to go for it."	"He was our No. 1 target all along. We've liked him for a long time."
"At the end of the day, the playoffs are a war of attrition and this deal gives us depth."	"It was a great experience playing there. The fans were always great to me and I wish them the best."	"The Kings proved once you get into the playoffs, anything can happen. That's all we're focused on right now."	"I don't see it as not being wanted by the team I'm leaving. I see it as being wanted by the team I'm joining."	"The expectations on us are high, but nobody expects more from us than we do."
"He wasn't easy to play against, so we're just happy he's on our side now."	"I wish we could've made it work here and won a championship, but this is a business and when you don't win hockey games, this is what happens."	"Obviously..." (A.K.A. free space)	"We like our team. We could've done something just for the sake of doing something, but nothing made sense for us."	"It is what it is and all I can do is go out and play my game."
"We like his compete level."	"The asking prices for some of these players was insane. I wasn't going to mortgage this team's future for a quick fix."	"We wanted to send a message with this deal: we want to win a Stanley Cup."	"When you see someone who's been in the league as long as he has and he's out there battling every shift, it makes you want to win for him."	"I've still got a lot of friends in that dressing room. It's going to be strange playing those guys."
"We think he's a good fit. Not everyone can play in this market, but he's a big-game player."	"If I had to be traded anywhere, this is where I wanted to be. No doubt about it. It's a first-class organization."	"Now we've got all the pieces. No more excuses. It's up to us to do what coach says and execute."	"He brings all the intangibles you look for: he's good in the room, he's a great teammate, and he does the little things you don't see on a scoresheet."	"Another GM said, 'I wish they'd told me that player was available before they'd traded him – I would've beaten their best offer.'"



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CHEVROLET



# NORRIS KNOCKING



From the scrap heap to the top of the heap, Mark Giordano is making a lot of NHL suits regret not taking a chance on him

By **Ryan Kennedy**

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# W

**HEN MARK GIORDANO FIRST CAME TO THE OHL's Owen Sound Attack, he stood out. Literally. "I still remember that first practice," said then-GM Michael Futa. "None of his equipment matched. The owner is looking at me like I have nine heads, and I'm thinking, 'Can someone please put this kid in some matching equipment?' "**

Futa, now the VP of hockey operations and director of player personnel for the Los Angeles Kings, was new to the OHL job in 2002 and took a chance on Giordano, a kid who went undrafted in the OHL and was playing for the Jr. A Brampton Capitals as an 18-year-old in his NHL draft year the season before. Futa loved Giordano's family when he met them and gave the young defenseman a full education package, something the small-market Attack didn't take lightly.

Futa had a hunch Giordano was one of those vaunted diamonds in the rough who could help his squad. "He loved the game," Futa said. "But

I don't think he'd ever properly trained. He was in great shape, but he was in beach shape, not hockey shape."

With more than a decade in the rearview mirror, Giordano is still humbled by his origin story and a little unsure of why Futa and coach Mike Stothers took a chance on him in the first place. "I was just trying to play hockey as long as I could," he said. "I wasn't the biggest guy in the world, I wasn't the best defensively,

I was pretty young and pretty raw."

His parents let him make the call between school (Ferris State was an option) and junior, and now Giordano is the captain of the surprisingly feisty Calgary Flames. He played in his first NHL All-Star Game in Columbus, and his name has been bandied about for Norris Trophy consideration thanks to the hefty workload and offensive acumen he brings to the Flames' blueline.

What Futa saw back in the fall

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**IN OUR DEFENSE CORPS RANKINGS** you'll find our picks for the NHL's best to worst 'D' units. Along with our explanation, we have the percentage of salary cap space taken up by blueliners on each team.







**FROM RUSSIA WITH 'D'**  
Calgary's Mark Giordano credits a year in the KHL as the turning point in his pro career.

## DEFENSE CORPS RANKINGS

1  **ST. LOUIS BLUES** 33.5%

Pick your poison. The Blues have great depth with Gunnarsson, Bouwmeester and Pietrangelo to name a few. And they play as a unit.

2  **NASHVILLE PREDATORS** 33.1%

Shea Weber is the star, but Roman Josi and Seth Jones have also been excellent. Sure, Pekka Rinne's great in net, but the Preds' 'D' is hot.

3  **CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS** 32.6%

The big four of Duncan Keith, Brent Seabrook, Johnny Oduya and Niklas Hjalmarsson are the best in the league.

4  **ANAHEIM DUCKS** 32.2%

Surprising Sami Vatanen is leading the charge in scoring from the blueline. The Ducks boast a nice array of skills on the back end.

5  **NEW YORK RANGERS** 32.0%

As good as Henrik Lundqvist is, he gets a lot of protection from stalwarts such as Ryan McDonagh, Marc Staal and Dan Girardi.

6  **BOSTON BRUINS** 24.3%

Zdeno Chara's injury hurt, but contributions from youngsters such as Dougie Hamilton and Torey Krug have helped overall.

7  **LOS ANGELES KINGS** 28.5%

Slava Voynov's legal trouble has been bad news, but Drew Doughty is still all-world, and buddy Jake Muzzin is doing his part.

8  **WASHINGTON CAPITALS** 39.7%

John Carlson is soaring, and the addition of veterans Brooks Orpik and Matt Niskanen has really helped the overall structure.

9  **WINNIPEG JETS** 39.1%

Despite an insane rash of injuries, the Jets have kept plugging away. Dustin Byfuglien leads the charge while Jacob Trouba continues to rise.

10  **MONTREAL CANADIENS** 39.7%

Carey Price gives this squad a lot of security, but P.K. Subban is still one to watch, while Andrei Markov continues his quiet excellence.



of 2002 was vision, poise and hockey sense. Giordano made crisp passes, played without fear and caught players with hard, solid bodychecks. Despite leading the Attack in scoring by a blueliner in both his seasons (including overage), he passed through his NHL draft eligibility without hearing his name called. His skating was cited as a weakness.

Even when scout Tom Webster convinced Calgary to take a chance on him as a free agent, it was years before Giordano soared in the NHL. It took a trip to Russia before he truly found his place in the hockey world. Playing for Moscow Dynamo in 2007-08 did wonders for his confidence. "I had a great experience," Giordano said. "I played a ton of minutes on bigger ice, and it helped my overall game for sure. Then I got an opportunity to come back, so it worked out really well."

Truth be told, the bigger ice wasn't ideal for Giordano, who skates just fine now and moves the puck with vigor. He much prefers the more dynamic North American game. But the work he put in with Dynamo represented a re-set in his young career and some fortuitous timing.

Calgary's blueline included Robyn

#### BORN LEADER

Giordano has had a smooth transition to wearing the 'C', learning from Jarome Iginla.

Regehr, Roman Hamrlik, Brad Stuart and Dion Phaneuf when Giordano left for Russia. While the Flames held on to franchise face Jarome Iginla for as long as possible (probably too long, to be honest), the trading of 'Iggy' to Pittsburgh in 2013 officially signalled a rebuild, and the guy they call 'Gio' has become more important with each season. "Gio is just a great leader, such a good guy to be around your first season," said rookie winger Johnny Gaudreau. "He's kind of a role model to me, someone to look up to who has played eight or 10 years now. I'm surprised this was his first All-Star Game, but I'm really fortunate to be part of the same team as him."

Giordano's rise somewhat mirrors that of the Flames themselves: nobody thought Calgary would do much this season, other than snap up another high draft pick to go along with building blocks such as Gaudreau, Sean Monahan and Sam Bennett. But wouldn't you know it? The Flames were in a playoff spot at the midway point of the

#### 11 CALGARY FLAMES 36.8%

It's all about the top four here, with Mark Giordano, T.J. Brodie, Kris Russell and Dennis Wideman doing the heavy lifting in Cowtown.

#### 12 PITTSBURGH PENGUINS 31.8%

No Orpik, no Niskanen? No problem. Kris Letang has led the charge for a blueline that brings a little bit of everything every game.

#### 13 MINNESOTA WILD 26.0%

Ryan Suter does everything, but younger acolytes such as Jared Spurgeon, Marco Scandella and Jonas Brodin can't be ignored.

#### 14 DETROIT RED WINGS 28.2%

Niklas Kronwall is the unquestioned leader here, though the Red Wings no longer count on offense from their defense.

#### 15 NEW YORK ISLANDERS 30.6%

The Islanders have been winning with offense, not defense, but the impact of Johnny Boychuk on this team has been crucial in other ways.

#### 16 VANCOUVER CANUCKS 29.8%

It's been a tough year for several Canucks defenders, though the team is keeping its head above water. Chris Tanev has been sharp.

#### 17 TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING 35.3%

Like the Isles, Tampa Bay wins with goals. Victor Hedman has been great, though injuries have cut into that productivity.

#### 18 SAN JOSE SHARKS 24.5%

Brent Burns is back and Marc-Edouard Vlasic is still sturdy, but keeping pucks out has been tough. Rookie Mirco Mueller is doing well.

#### 19 FLORIDA PANTHERS 32.2%

Aaron Ekblad is a front-runner for the Calder Trophy and that's not easy for a blueliner. Veterans Brian Campbell and Willie Mitchell have helped.

#### 20 ARIZONA COYOTES 30.2%

Arizona's top threats are D-men Keith Yandle and Oliver Ekman-Larsson, but the results haven't been great overall.



season and were even keeping the defending Stanley Cup champion Kings at bay in the wild card race. "We just have that never-say-die attitude this year," Giordano said. "We're playing like a team that has nothing to lose, and that has helped us as well. We weren't expected to do much, because I don't think we got enough credit for our young guys coming in and playing the way they have. That has really pushed us forward."

As has the D-corps that Giordano is so integral to. He and partner T.J. Brodie were each averaging more than 25 minutes per night in Calgary while facing the toughest competition on the opposing team. On top of that, Giordano led the league at the all-star break in points by a defenseman with 41 in 48 games. Hence the Norris chatter, which Giordano rationalizes away. "Any time you put up numbers you get a little more recognition, it's just the way it is," he said. "I'm just trying to take pride in playing a consistent game, especially defensively against other teams' top lines."

But those numbers are quite important. Coming into the season, it was hard to peg anyone on the Calgary roster capable of registering 65 points this year. In reality, the team has gotten along swimmingly, and with three blueliners (Giordano, Brodie and Dennis Wideman) among the top six in Flames scoring, the club boasts a balanced attack. "It's not only from a

defending standpoint, but in a lot of cases they've driven our offense," said GM Brad Treliving. "It's really given us a foundation and some stability. We need everybody, and everybody needs to play a part."

Right now, Giordano is one of the biggest engines. Not only is he leading the Flames with his offensive skills, but he's also the face of the team, wearing the captain's 'C' with pride. Considering he's the first Flame to get that honor since Iginla left, that's not a job one takes lightly in Alberta. Having played with Iginla, however, Giordano had a pretty good idea of how to follow his predecessor. "His No. 1 thing is that he's such a competitive guy," Giordano said. "He had that emotion that he brought every night. He treated people exceptionally well, and I tried to take that from him, as well as how competitive he was day in and day out."

That the Flames are competitive this season is a testament to many factors, from Gaudreau's derring-do as a rookie scorer to goaltenders Jonas Hiller, Karri Ramo and Joni Ortio all taking turns getting hot. And the players work hard for coach Bob Hartley.

Treliving has put together a lineup that has produced offense despite a rash of injuries at the beginning of the season, and that idea of everybody including the defense contributing has paid off. It may be unorthodox, but it worked in a strong first half, and perhaps it's even fitting that the team is led by a guy who few in hockey expected would make an impact in the game. Giordano may have started in mismatched gear, but everything is lining up for him now. **THE**

### WATCH ME, KID

Giordano, an eight-year vet, made his ASG debut the same time as Johnny Gaudreau.



### 21 CAROLINA HURRICANES 25.5%

Justin Faulk has been the team's best player, and the defense actually hasn't been bad for the bottom-dwelling Canes.

### 22 OTTAWA SENATORS 35.0%

It's a lot of Erik Karlsson and prayers elsewhere. Marc Methot's back injury is a hindrance and the youngsters are still coming into their own.

### 23 NEW JERSEY DEVILS 21.1%

The good news is how young New Jersey's core is. Damon Severson, Eric Gelinas, Jon Merrill and Adam Larsson are all on the ascendancy.

### 24 COLORADO AVALANCHE 24.8%

Erik Johnson was having a cracking offensive year before the all-star break, but overall this unit has struggled.

### 25 PHILADELPHIA FLYERS 43.2%

We knew it would be ugly from the outset when Kimmo Timonen was diagnosed with blood clots. Sure enough, the Flyers have struggled.

### 26 COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS 34.1%

Injuries have shredded the Jackets, but Ryan Murray's return will help. Jack Johnson continues to take on too much of a burden.

### 27 DALLAS STARS 18.6%

Rookie John Klingberg has been a bright spot, but overall the 'D' can't protect Kari Lehtonen, who's been having problems of his own.

### 28 TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS 32.9%

Jake Gardiner has taken a step back, Dion Phaneuf gets burned on the outside too frequently and the Leafs struggle to clear the zone.

### 29 BUFFALO SABRES 32.7%

Josh Gorges hasn't righted the ship, and even though the blueline is scoring more than its share, it's only because the forwards can't.

### 30 EDMONTON OILERS 29.2%

The veterans haven't been able to stop the bleeding, and the kids aren't ready yet. Hence, a lot of pain and suffering in Edmonton.

# 2015 HOCKEY SCHOOL GUIDE

The Hockey News

37<sup>th</sup>  
ANNUAL EDITION

## Hockey Camps Need A Good Dose Of Fun, Too

Though the main focus, by far, is improving the skills of the players, don't overlook the importance of some fireside bonding

By DANIEL WERYHA

Unlike the average summer getaway, hockey camp is no vacation. Sure, some schools have made an array of recreational activities available to their players, but that's only after they've completed the rigorous training schedule designed to turn the average player into the developed puck-smith.

One or two weeks of hockey camp is still only a fraction of an entire season. For kids looking to make the most of their time at camp, knowing what to expect can really go a long way.

The Heartland Hockey Camp in Deerwood, Minn., is decked with all the typical things you'd expect in a summer school. Steve Jensen is the executive director and founding owner. As an Olympian for the U.S. national team and former NHLer with the L.A. Kings and Minnesota North Stars, Jensen understands the value of a good work ethic. His five-day program has five training sessions a day including two on-ice sessions for four hours of total ice time.

To prepare for the condensed regimen at hockey camp, Jensen stresses pre-camp fitness. "There's not many hockey players that get on the ice four hours everyday for five consecutive days. We ask them to do a little jogging, do some rollerblading, some light weightlifting, some bike riding," he said.

At the start of every camp session, Jensen puts all his new campers through a 12-test program used to evaluate skills

ranging from varying aspects of skating to shooting, one that includes a one-mile run. The testing process helps coaches separate players based on skill level and set achievable goals for the week. "To honor and recognize the top performers at our camp, we create a record-holder board. So we've got kids coming from all over the world that aspire to be on our record holding board," he said.

Jensen believes the incentives drive young players to work harder and come back year after year.

One skill that often needs work is stickhandling. Jensen says he spends a lot of time teaching players how to handle the puck with their head up at full speed. Simple breakout drills go along way with the proper coaching. Players work on moving the puck while looking up ice. "We found by getting the radar gun out and gauging their shooting speed and then working on some soft-hand skills with stick handling blocks and stick handling courses that we've found a tremendous way to improve both those skills during the week at camp," Jensen said.

Other schools, like Ecole de Hockey de la Capitale in Quebec, spend a lot of time working on power skating. Eric Morin, the founding owner of the school employs a team of coaches who are trained physical educators. He says they offer course-specific camps that focus on individual skills for an entire session. "It's nice to work on game systems, but we're wasting our time with the mite,

squirt and pee-wee players if we don't work on those skating attributes," he said (translated from French by the author).

While camps try to give their kids as much ice time as possible, a lot of valuable training time is spent off the ice as well. A good pair of running shoes is just as important as skates when running with parachutes and lifting weights.

Heartland does a gym session each day for kids of all age groups. Even the mini-mites get their crack at some extremely light weight training to get them comfortable with the movements.

Ecole de Hockey de la Capitale uses time off the ice to highlight the importance of the intangible aspects of the game.

Once a week Morin brings in a nutritionist to conduct a seminar on the significance of a healthy diet. "Last year we even had a sports psychologist specialized in working with youth athletes during one of our theory classes," he said.

However, camp isn't all just hard work and no play. While camps focus primarily on the game, there is still plenty of time for fun. "We created a very fun environment not only on the ice but off the ice. We offer one of the largest variety of recreational opportunities of any hockey camp in the world," Jensen said.

When the training day is over, players at Heartland can often spend their time by the lake participating in a variety of summer activities common to your run-of-the-mill camps. Players are no strangers to fire and song, either. As the day gears down, Jensen says campers can spend valuable bonding time until they eventually retire to their quarters and recuperate for their next training day: "We attract a very diverse group of hockey players so one of our biggest focuses is to make friends and network with people all over the world playing the sport of hockey." ■



# Age Is More Than A Number At Smart Hockey Camps

Not treating each player as an individual during the summer months can lead to hairy situations

By **TUCKER WILSON**

**W**hen the season is over and all the tykes, novices, atoms, peewees and bantams are looking to step up their game over the summer, hockey camp should be the first consideration. But those age divisions were in place for a reason during the cold winter months. Should they disappear with the snow?

The obvious answer is no, but it wasn't so obvious to Canadian hockey camps until recently, says Graham Parsons, founder and president of Alberta's Sylvan Lake Hockey Camp. Parsons' camp emphasizes age-specific training, both on- and off-ice, in the hopes of helping players better develop long term. It's all part of a program released by Hockey Canada called the Long Term Player Development Model. "We're just starting to emphasize it where it's age specific training development, using different sports models, different activities, and different drills that are specific to certain ages," Parsons said. "If it's a young kid, they need different activities to make sure that they can do it."

It's a simple enough concept, but often overlooked by eager coaches. "People try and get too ahead of the player. The player needs success in the drills. They have to be put in a position to succeed in the drills in order to advance," Parsons said.

These are the same mandates found in

Hockey Canada's LTPD, which preaches "doing the right thing for the player at the right stage in their development." Camps like Sylvan Lake have taken these messages seriously, catering to players' individual developments both on and off the ice.

Players at Parsons' camp don't hit the gym until at least 14 years of age, and even that is strictly monitored to make sure he or she is ready and capable. "Any qualified trainer will be able to tell you the right age that players should be doing weight training and the kinds of weight training," he said. "It all goes back to the long-term player development. It's such an important document in Hockey Canada that we are just introducing, and it's what the Europeans and Americans have adopted and taken seriously prior to us, even though it's our document."

That kind of commitment to age-specific training has gone on at camps all across the United States, and it's no more evident than at the Minnesota Hockey Camps.

Founded more than 35 years ago by Herb Brooks and Chuck Grillo, Minnesota Hockey Camps welcomes all ages. Campers range from mites to NHL players, with current stars like James van Riemsdyk and Scott Hartnell taking up residence at the Nisswa, Minn., site. Current owner and hockey director, Dean Grillo, says age-specific training was a focus when the camp first started: "We've

always just said that guys shouldn't be doing things when growth plates are moving. Everyone moves along at a different rate. Herbie Brooks was way ahead of his time. Herbie instilled it in us."

Like Sylvan Lake, Grillo estimates that around 14 years old is when kids can start seriously lifting weights, but they introduce younger players to off-ice regimens as well. "The peewees and the younger kids will go into the weight room session, but it will be more of their own body weight controlled, rather than throwing around," he said.

There's no clear-cut number for when a player is ready to move beyond body-weight exercises, like sit-ups and push-ups, says Grillo. He's got a team of experts ready to make those decisions. "We have three to four people in our weight room and it could be within one age group they're looking after that you have 10 different body types," he said. "It's crazy how different these body types are and you're going to have a kid that might have hair on his face and he's ready to go."

And when players are ready at Minnesota Hockey Camps, they should be prepared for intense and varying workouts. In between on-ice sessions, players take part in whole-body workouts. Ropes, medicine balls, plates and rubber bands are spread out in the gym and the lakeside campgrounds, giving campers a smorgasbord of different exercise opportunities. "Hockey's changed so much. The days of laying around on a bench press are pretty much over," Grillo said.

And those sentiments span all ages. How hockey schools accommodate player ages and needs, however, should be a major consideration this upcoming offseason — even if the player "has hair on his face." ■



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# Goalie-Specific Schools Give Keepers What They Need

The life of a tender is a lonely, stressful one that can only really be understood – and taught – by those who know the position intimately

By **MARK KRANJC**

**T**here is no position as distinctive as the goaltender. A great goalie has to be the most athletic player on the ice, while maintaining a cool head through the ups and downs of three periods.

It's also a lonely life. One goal can turn a savior into a scapegoat, and unlike forwards or defensemen, there aren't other linemates to shoulder the blame. Goalies need to be mentally sharp, good under pressure and crazy enough to throw their bodies in front of speeding pieces of frozen rubber. A role that specialized requires specialized training.

While a normal hockey camp gives goaltenders a chance to face a lot of shots, instructors don't pay much attention to a goalie's form and style. A goalie-specific camp, however, gives puckstoppers the training and education they need to take their game to the next level.

At Janosz School of Goaltending, head instructor Bob Janosz brings nearly a decade of coaching experience at the AHL and NHL levels to his camps and clinics. This has allowed him to stay up-to-date on the changing nature of the position, the latest styles and techniques and understand what scouts are looking for when they draft. "We've had a consistent theme that's constantly changing with the times, as goaltending's always changing," said Janosz.

This is important, as NHLers are popular-

izing new techniques like the "reverse-VH", where a goalie drops and leans against the post on sharp-angled shots. While effective, Janosz warns against using some of these methods unless properly instructed: "Whenever something new comes out, kids see it and they're not sure when to use it or how to use it, and a lot of times they start overusing it. We teach these, but also the time and place for them."

The position is complex and the camps at Janosz School of Goaltending, designed for goalies aged seven and up, account for this. They include two on-ice sessions per day. The first is geared towards things like fundamentals and footwork, while the other focuses on game situations.

According to Janosz, strong fundamentals, proper movement around the crease, and the effective use of hands and feet to react, as opposed to simply blocking everything, has become an important part of goaltending. "Anytime they can get square and set, then it's going to help them not only make more saves, but control more rebounds," he said. "Having good footwork is a big part of being better at that."

However, goaltending is more than just stopping the puck and instructors have to account for that.

Camps at the Janosz School hold classroom sessions to discuss mental training, game management strategies and film study. "We have very interactive sessions

where the kids aren't just sitting there getting lectured, they're actually involved," Janosz said. "We show a lot of NHL teaching clips of different situations so students can see what the NHL players are doing. The kids really like to see that what we're applying on the ice, it's actually what happens in real games."

There also are more intangible advantages to a goalie-specific camp.

Goaltending is a lonesome position by nature. If there are two goalies on a team, they're usually competing for the same starting position. A big advantage that goalie camps have over private training is the solidarity and knowledge-sharing nature of being completely surrounded by other students who play the same position. "I think the big difference is you're around a bunch of other goalies that you can learn from and see what they're doing in the group. A lot of times younger kids will learn from kids a little bit older," said Janosz.

This goes towards strengthening what he calls the "Goalie's Union," where net-minders help each other out. The environment is a welcome change from the usually solitary life of a goaltender.

Janosz has been running the school for 15 years and a many of his instructors are former students themselves. The variety in on- and off-ice training, classroom sessions and interactive teaching makes the camp challenging, but Janosz says the goalies who are willing to put in the time and effort come out improved, ready to move up the ranks and have an enjoyable time in the company of other keepers. "I think we work the kids hard but we have a good time doing it and we do it in a very positive way," he said. "It's a lot of work, but it's a lot of fun, too."

To progress, young goalies need a camp run by experts who know the quirks of the position inside and out. ■

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<b>SCHOOL DIRECTOR ADDRESS</b> <b>TEL</b> <b>FAX</b> <b>EMAIL</b> <b>WEBSITE</b>	<b>Heartland Hockey Camp</b> Steve Jensen 24921 Arena Drive, Deerwood, Minnesota 56444 800-945-7465 steve@heartlandhockey.com www.heartlandhockey.com	3-83 years old	L5, \$1,400 per week, 6 hours of ice time daily	Condos, Tree House	Private beach with giant water slide, water skiing, kayaking and canoeing. Special Pro- grams by U.S. Olympian		
<b>SCHOOL DIRECTOR ADDRESS</b> <b>TEL</b> <b>FAX</b> <b>EMAIL</b> <b>WEBSITE</b>	<b>Janosz School of Goaltending</b> Bob Janosz Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Las Vegas 716-308-9224 info@bobjanosz.com www.bobjanosz.com	Age & skill specific camps/ clinics AAA Elite, Advanced, Adult, Beginner	Adult - May 29-30 - Amherst, NY. Elite AAA- July 13-16- Amherst, NY. Syracuse, NY - July 20-23. Las Vegas, NV - July 28-31. Amherst, NY - Aug. 3-7. Buffalo, NY - Aug. 10-14. Beginner - Aug. 17-21- Amherst, NY. Webster, NY - Aug. 25-27. Elite AAA Clinic - July 1-Aug. 19 - Buffalo, NY. Amherst Sunday - July 12- Aug. 23.	Check Web for location details.	Other Facilities E.g. - Water- sports, Land Sports etc...	AAA Elite, Advanced, Adult, Beginner NHL Video Critique, Classroom Sessions, Video Analysis, Off-Ice Training	

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# THE TEENAGE SENSATION

Danny Lewicki was still just a kid when he completed a hat trick of championship titles. Then his career hit some bumps in the road

BY NAMISH MODI

**D**ANNY LEWICKI MAY NOT HAVE HAD THE FAIREST OF SHAKES AT an NHL career, but he can be remembered for one particular record. He remains the only player to win the Allan Cup, Memorial Cup and Stanley Cup as a junior.

"I don't think that record will ever be broken," he said.

Lewicki, 83, has fond memories of his playing days but also recalls some things that didn't go his way, resulting in a short career. In his autobiography, *From the Coal Docks to the NHL*, Lewicki highlights his life from his childhood growing up in an immigrant enclave in Fort William, Ont., all the way to the end of his pro career – nine seasons as an NHLer. "There were many problems with management in those years," Lewicki said. "You were not allowed to speak back, which I did, unfortunately."

Lewicki signed a C-form in 1948 when the Toronto Maple Leafs purchased him at 16. Little did he know this document would result in him not being able to decide where to play when he turned 18. He was playing with the Stratford Kroehlers of the OHA at the time. The Leafs then moved him to their affiliate, the Toronto Marlboros in 1949. He refused to report. "In retrospect, I believe a can of worms was opened for which (Leafs owner Conn) Smythe never forgave me," Lewicki wrote.

Eventually Lewicki reported to the Marlboros, and it would be a blessing in disguise. He was a key contributor for the 1950 Allan Cup champion senior Marlboros. He had 42 points in 17 playoff games and was named playoff MVP.

It was the second time Lewicki had been a key cog on a playoff march. He had 40 points in the playoffs for Port Arthur and was instrumental in a sweep of the Barrie Flyers in the 1948 Memorial Cup final.

Lewicki broke through with the Leafs at 19 in 1950 and had a tremendous start before disaster struck. The Leafs held an open practice with school kids in attendance, and someone threw a paper clip on the ice. Lewicki, a fast skating left winger, hit the metal full stride. "My groin was torn to shreds," he said.

It was a devastating blow for Lewicki, who at the time had 16 goals with nine remaining games and was challenging Terry Sawchuk for the Calder Trophy. He ended up finishing third.



## PLAYING THROUGH PAIN

A badly torn groin injury didn't stop Lewicki from winning his first and only Stanley Cup in 1951 as a Leaf.

When the 1951 playoffs began, Lewicki wasn't healed fully, but he was ordered to play by the polarizing Smythe. "Mr. Smythe said to me, 'Stand up, pull your trousers down.' So I pulled them down and he said, 'Look at him, he's got legs like a thoroughbred. If he can walk, he can skate. He's playing.' He (told the trainer), 'You tape him up, freeze him.'"

An ailing Lewicki played the playoffs as a checking winger, helping the Leafs win the Cup. He spent most of his next three

seasons with the Pittsburgh Hornets of the AHL before being sold to the New York Rangers in 1954. Lewicki didn't squander this chance to be back in the NHL, notching 53 points with the Rangers in 1954-55, earning

second-team all-star honors. He spent four seasons with the Rangers before playing one final year in Chicago.

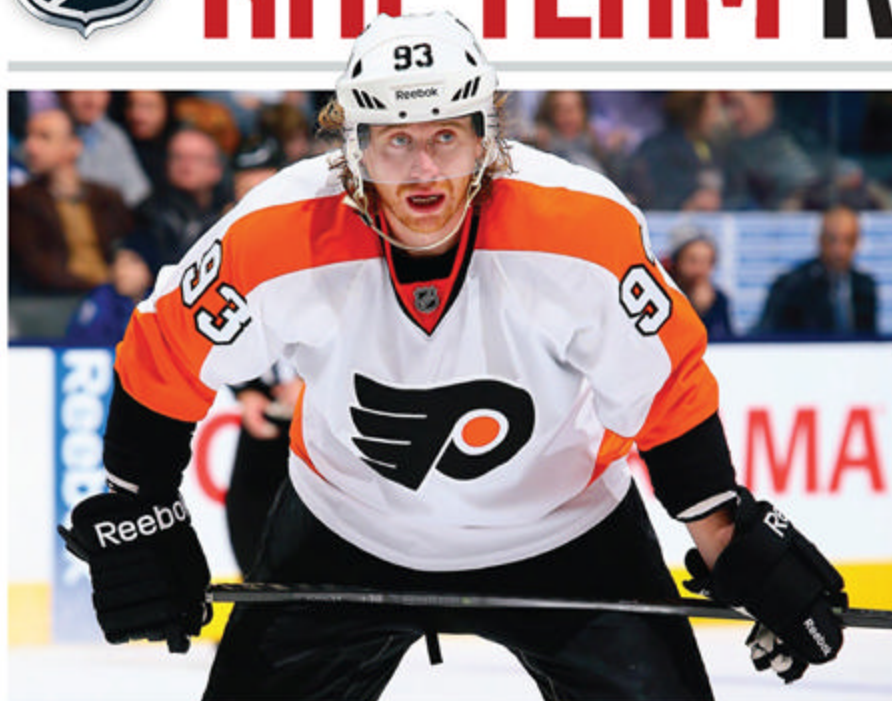
Following his playing career, Lewicki coached for a brief time with Jr. A Hamilton in the OHA. After coaching, he sold advertising for CHUM Radio for 15 years, followed by sales manager jobs for Munro, then Acklands. Lewicki will always think of himself first as a hockey player. "You have that built in your heart," he said. "Once a hockey player, always a hockey player."

**“ I BELIEVE A CAN OF WORMS WAS OPENED FOR WHICH CONN SMYTHE NEVER FORGAVE ME**

– Danny Lewicki



# NHL TEAM REPORTS



## FLYING HIGHER THAN EVER

Jakub Voracek had almost beaten his best full-season point total by the 2014-15 all-star break.

Or maybe it's just that Voracek longs to be remembered as something more than line-mate Claude Giroux's wingman and wants to see how far he can take his talent. Whatever the motivator, Voracek decided to trade carbohydrates for more protein-rich diet choices. If he isn't ready to be a spokesperson for Weight Watchers now, who is? "With the diet, I was feeling better, had more energy to do more things," he said. "So everything else comes with it. It just comes with experience."

"I would say every single year since I got traded I've gotten better and better, which is really important for me. It gives you confidence (knowing) that every year, if you come ready, you know you can have a better year. That's exactly what happened to me since I entered the NHL. For a hockey player, that's a huge step."

If Voracek were to win the NHL scoring title, it would be a first in franchise history. Jagr, for one, wouldn't be surprised. In the one year (2011-12) he spent with the Flyers, he got to know Voracek a little better. Now, from his vantage point about 90 miles up the New Jersey Turnpike, Jagr is well aware of the transformation. He agrees the diet and added muscle has enhanced Voracek's game. He doesn't think Voracek is a different player, but he sees a more confident player.

Jagr's training regimen is legendary – the midnight workouts, the post-game weightlifting sessions, the all-around commitment to fitness. "You have to have a plan, believe in it and do it every day," Jagr said, "So it gives you extra strength and extra confidence. So you know you did everything to prepare for the game. It's like when you go to the school and you know you're going to have a test. If you study, you go in there laughing because you know nothing can surprise you. If you don't study, you're going to be scared and hope the teacher got the flu or something and doesn't show up."

Don't think for a moment Voracek wasn't all eyes and ears when Jagr showed up in Philly in the summer of '11 just a few weeks after the former had been traded from the Columbus Blue Jackets. "Everybody was kind of watching him, saying, 'Look at his work ethic,'" Voracek said. "That changed

## VORACEK KEEPS THINGS LIGHT

A streamlined physique and a good-natured sense of humor have fuelled the Flyer's breakout scoring binge

BY WAYNE FISH

**T**HE LEADING SCORER IN THE NHL HASN'T even started to untie his skates when the cameras, lights and recorders quietly encircle his locker like slow-moving flood waters on a rainy spring day.

When the first query has to do with his recent scoring tear and ascent to the league's pinnacle, rather than the Flyers' victory the previous night, Jakub 'Jake' Voracek grins and shakes his head. "It's early, guys," he says, even though the season is half over. "We have a lot of work to do. I'm not thinking about that (scoring lead) right now."

They might as well reuse the tape from that one and keep playing it back so the Czech native doesn't have to repeat himself.

It's been this way ever since Voracek, 25, made a more serious commitment to the sport last summer. When he showed up at

a pre-season golf tournament near the Flyers' South Jersey training facility 10 pounds lighter than last year's 219, people did a double-take. And when he stepped on the ice and blazed down the rink, onlookers had to blink again.

But now it's post-NHL all-star break and it's starting to sink in something special is going on. Why now? Voracek has been a good, steady player in his first three years with the Flyers, but as the calendar moved from January to February, he was on the verge of already passing his career high of 62 points (set last year). Some say it's the maturity factor. Others believe Voracek has been tracking the career of fellow Kladno, Czech Republic native Jaromir Jagr and has realized playing at a high level at 43 involves more than good luck and genetics.



my view, my opinion on things. Like working out after the game when you are tired. You can work out after the game, and it gives you more than when you work out the other (off) days."

Jagr's been around so long that some of Voracek's earliest memories are of the future Hall of Famer playing back in their hometown during the 1994-95 NHL lockout. It was a very impressionable time for young Jakub. His father, Miloslav, who was in the restaurant business, took his son to a rink one day to watch skaters and figured Jakub's interest would last only a short while. "He thought I was going to be there for just 10 minutes and then go home," Jake said with a chuckle. "But I was sitting there, watching them skate for hours. So for Christmas, he bought me skates and I started skating."

Jagr, who wears No. 68 to honor the Czech revolt against the Soviets in 1968, had already won two Stanley Cups in Pittsburgh as sidekick to Mario Lemieux by the time Voracek was ready to take up hockey. Voracek actually crossed paths with Jagr then. "I had a picture taken with him when I was four-and-a-half, maybe five during the lockout," Voracek said. "That's when everyone started realizing how good he is, what kind of league the NHL was, because it was starting to be on TV. Everybody started to blow it up. Jagr was becoming this huge superstar."

So Jake allowed himself to dream and now, 20 years later, that fantasy is beginning to take shape.

Besides hockey talent, the other trait the Kladno guys share is a great sense of humor. If there's one thing the Flyers have needed in this rollercoaster of a season, it's just that. Voracek is considered such a comic in the dressing room that he can crack the team up with just a funny look or a one-liner.

Goalie Steve Mason, who followed Voracek over from Columbus in a 2013 trade, also has that dry wit and appreciates the service his buddy provides. "Jake is absolutely one of the funniest guys I know," Mason said. "He's funny sometimes, and he doesn't realize he's being funny. It's probably the most natural thing he can be."

"He's a very real person. He cares so much about this game and about the guys in this room. He's just a fun person to be around. He's a guy that when we go on the road, guys want to be around him, go out to dinner with him because you know you're going to have a good time. He's a leader and that's what you want to have in a leader. People want to follow."

Flyers GM Ron Hextall was cracking jokes as a rookie goaltender before playing the Wayne Gretzky-Mark Messier monster – also known as the Edmonton Oilers – in Game 6 of the 1987 Stanley Cup final, which the Flyers won, so he can see the value of



some comic relief. "When you find players like Jake, he's got an infectious, upbeat personality," Hextall said. "It really does reverberate around your room. It brings positive energy. You're going to go through tough times. Those are the types of guys you need to bring everybody else up. Jake's been a good player, but his personality has been just as important."

The ability to make people laugh in the worst of times serves not only Voracek's teammates, but the joke teller as well. Putting poor performances in the rearview mirror can be a valuable tool. "I'm a pretty sarcastic guy," he said with a grin. "I was always an easy-going guy. I wouldn't say I didn't take anything seriously, but I always try to look over things when they're not going well."

"After a loss, obviously I'm upset. You know, I hate losing. You lose but, then you look at it and you have to move on. The next day we have another big game. You just have to stay positive. Sometimes it's hard. When you're not doing well, you have to think to yourself, 'It's only going to get better.' That's what I think helps."

So now Voracek and Giroux are set to rub shoulders with some other former great

## ARRIVING PREPARED

Voracek positions himself better to succeed now thanks to his diet and a changed workout schedule.

Flyer tandems: Bobby Clarke and Bill Barber, Dave Poulin and Tim Kerr, Eric Lindros and John LeClair. Where they wind up will have as much to do with team success as individual achievements. Giroux believes they're on the right track. "Our chemistry on the ice is getting better every game," he said. "We do a great job of communicating and knowing what to do with the puck, where to go. For him to come in this year and get the credit he should have, I'm pretty happy for him."

So while the Flyers have had more ruts than smooth patches this season, Voracek's own plight gives him reason to smile. He's one step ahead of the Sidney Crosbys and Evgeni Malkins. He's got a girlfriend, Nicole, whose Ohio State Buckeyes just won the NCAA football championship, and maybe he can celebrate with a forbidden pizza if he somehow winds up in the playoffs.

In any case, that down-to-earth personality will get him through the day. Bring on the cameras...and the pressure. **TEN**



# THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD

Bergeron shouldered heavy responsibility with key teammates out. Now Boston is healthy and ready to roll

**C**OACHES AND PARENTS IN THE know have considered Patrice Bergeron a player to watch for years. He's the guy young players are told to study if they want to excel at both ends of the ice. The Bruins' center is a player to watch down the stretch this season, too, now that his full team is around him again.

Bergeron's all but unparalleled defensive game has earned him the Selke Trophy twice in the past three seasons, but he is first and foremost a team player who treasures his medals (two Olympic gold, a gold at the World Championship and 2011 Stanley Cup ring more than any individual trophy. "These things happen because of the help of your linemates and teammates," he said.

Bergeron, 29, was among those most impacted by the absence of David Krejci and Zdeno Chara before they returned from injuries in the first half of December. With Krejci, who centers the Bruins' top offensive line, sidelined 20 games, Bergeron was chief among those expected to pick up the slack. It wasn't easy, as he faced the checking lines and shutdown defense pairs Krejci typically draws.

Chara's absence for 19 games added pressure, too. Without the big blueliner's elite shutdown game behind him, Bergeron's assignments against opponents' scoring lines became more challenging. "I was trying not to think about that," Bergeron said. "That's when you start forcing things, when bad things happen - when you try to do too much."

Production suffered at times. He had only a goal and seven points through the season's first 12 games and endured an 11-game goal-less streak from Nov. 21 through Dec. 16.

Yet, through late January, Bergeron projected to 56 points for the season - not too far off the 63-point pace of the past two. He remained among the NHL's top faceoff men, second in draws taken and win percentage (58.9) at the All-Star Game break. The only number down noticeably was plus-minus, but that stat has lost its wallop in the advanced stats era. Bergeron's Corsi Close? Still among the league leaders.

Still, Bergeron looked for more down the stretch as the Bruins sought to improve their playoff position. "You always want to be in better position," he said. "You always want to have a better year." — **MIKE LOFTUS**

## STRETCH DRIVE PLAYER TO WATCH



The Ducks collapsed in the playoffs last season largely due to a lack of secondary scoring. But the summer acquisition of **Ryan Kesler** provided them with as solid a one-two punch down the middle as it gets. All eyes will be on the proven post-season performer this spring. One goal in a 14-game run through January caused some concern.



**Mike Smith** has had a forgettable year that will keep him restless all summer. But with four years left on his contract at a \$5.67-million cap hit, he isn't going anywhere. With an SP 30 points lower than his three-year average with the Yotes, the best the team can hope for is good body language and battling spirit down the stretch.



When Boston won the Cup in 2011, **David Krejci** led them in points in the regular season and playoffs. He was slow to produce after missing 17 games in November and December but approached point-per-game production by February. The Bruins need more of that from their No. 2 center, whose cap hit spikes to \$7.25 million next year.



**Cody Hodgson** didn't score once in January and, with just two goals in 48 games, went almost two months between goals. With three years left on a deal with a \$4.25-million cap hit, he needs a change of scenery. A better showing down the stretch might increase his value over the summer or rejuvenate him entering next season.



**Johnny Gaudreau** didn't play more than 44 games a season in three years at Boston College, so there was concern the 150-pound rookie would hit the proverbial wall in the campaign's final third. He is so elusive on his skates that he's avoided full force hits and crunches in the corners. He never sustained an injury in development hockey.





## STRETCH DRIVE PLAYER TO WATCH



When **Jordan Staal** was acquired from Pittsburgh in 2012, he was expected to make a big impact. A fractured fibula wiped out the beginning of this season, but since the calendar flipped to 2015, Staal has lived up to his promise, forming a terrifying twosome with brother Eric up front and helping the Hurricanes improve.



**Patrick Sharp** has been a model of consistency, reaching 30 goals, 65 points or both in five of his past six full seasons. But a right leg injury cost him 14 games, and he hasn't had the same scoring touch when healthy, with 10 goals through 37 games. Is Sharp simply breaking down at 33 with 106 games of playoff mileage?



Much was made of Nathan MacKinnon's sophomore struggles, but what's **Matt Duchene's** excuse? The lightning-quick pivot struggled to produce after leading the Avs in scoring two straight seasons. He reverted to his inconsistent form of 2011-12. Colorado won't make the playoffs unless he finds himself.



It's been a lost season due to injuries, but with **Ryan Murray** returning from knee surgery, the Jackets had something to look forward to. The second overall pick in 2012 has been great when healthy, bringing poise and mobility to the blueline. Getting reps the rest of the way will benefit the youngster, even if the playoffs are out of reach.



What happened to **Kari Lehtonen**? After four straight effective and relatively healthy seasons, he struggled to stop the puck, posting a career-worst .903 SP. The Stars can't recover from their slow start unless he turns things around. His .917 SP 5-on-5 ranked 29th among 43 goalies with 600 or more minutes played.



## VARLAMOV'S VOTE OF CONFIDENCE

Avs showed faith in Varlamov by making him stretch run starter. He reciprocates by believing in his teammates

**T**HE AVALANCHE THINK SO HIGHLY OF goalie Semyon Varlamov that they banished the NHL save percentage leader, rookie Calvin Pickard, to the AHL. They still view Varlamov – last season's team MVP and a Vezina Trophy finalist – as the undisputed king of Colorado's net. "Let's not forget what 'Varly' did for us last year," said coach Patrick Roy. "Varly is our No. 1 goalie and will be our No. 1 goalie."

The Avs say they want Pickard, 22, to continually play with AHL Lake Erie and not just back Varlamov up. But perhaps they don't want to be tempted to play the guy with a .936 SP. Pickard was outstanding while Varlamov was shelved three times with the same groin injury. But since Varlamov, 26, came off injured reserve and reclaimed his net Dec. 23, the Russian started 16 of 18 games. He went 7-3-2 in January.

Third-string Reto Berra is Varlamov's regular backup as Pickard continues to play almost every game for Lake Erie. Interestingly, the plan is to call up Pickard and have him start to conclude a consecutive-night stretch, particularly on the road. Pickard did just that Jan. 13 at Carolina, after Varlamov started the previous night in Washington. "The

coaching staff gave me huge confidence by doing that," Varlamov said of being named the clear-cut No. 1 the rest of the season. "Second year in a row, how they believed in me, I really appreciate it. There's always competition between the goalies. Doesn't matter how much money you make or anything else. 'Picks' came here and was playing so well. It was good because we needed those points, and he grabbed those for us. Now, it's my turn to do the same."

Similar to last season, when Colorado surprisingly captured the Central Division title and finished with 112 points, opponents continually outshoot the Avs. But now the offense doesn't generate as much, particularly late in games, and the Avs will have to rally to make the playoffs. Varlamov believes they will. "Last year we were sharper, all the time," he said. "When we were losing games 2-1 and going into the third period, we'd score a couple goals and win or score the big goal in overtime. We won lots of games like that. This year, we aren't winning as many of those games. But this team is getting better and better. The guys are playing well. We feel we have a really good chance to make the playoffs." – **MIKE CHAMBERS**



# THE BURDEN OF THE CROWN

Staying on top isn't easy. Kopitar must excel at both ends of the ice to keep his Kings in the playoff hunt

**K**NOWING HE WAS GOING SOMEWHERE where he'd have to clean up a little, Anze Kopitar shaved his scruffy beard for the Los Angeles Kings' visit to the White House in early February. Most of us have grown used to seeing Kopitar with lots of facial hair, particularly those who pay attention to the playoffs.

With 64 playoff games over the past three seasons, that's a lot of hair growth. And it might also be a lot of fatigue. After all, Kopitar has played almost a full season of extra, really hard hockey over the past three springs.

Right around the same time Kopitar and his teammates pressed the flesh with U.S. president Barack Obama, they sat on the outside of the playoff picture. And while we've seen this possum playing from the Kings before in the regular season, there was a real sense they were in trouble. In 2012-13's 48-game regular season, the Kings had 59 points. They had just 54 in the same number of games this season.

Some of the reason for that was Kopitar's slow start. He struggled mightily through the season's first quarter along with his teammates before scoring 24 points over a 17-game stretch in

December and January. He was on pace for 65 points, which is respectable for a player with the two-way game Kopitar has but hardly the production you'd expect from a guy Wayne Gretzky called the third-best player in the NHL behind Sidney Crosby and Jonathan Toews. "We've played a lot of hockey over the past couple of years," Kopitar said. "But at the same time, we can't use that as an excuse. I can't use it as an excuse."

The Kings are a big team that grinds its opponents down, pouncing when their foe experiences a moment of weakness. Kopitar is central to that game plan because of his size, skill and two-way ability. The minutes he plays are hard ones in which he willingly makes physical and statistical sacrifices. But with the extra pressure to provide offense for a team that desperately needs it this season, Kopitar shoulders an awfully big load.

Another Kopitar-like stretch will go a long way toward leading the Kings to the playoffs and once there, they've proven capable of crushing their challengers. "We play the game because we love it," he said. "Obviously, you want to play in the meaningful games. And for us, it starts now." — **KEN CAMPBELL**

## STRETCH DRIVE PLAYER TO WATCH



If the Hart Trophy criterion were the player actually most valuable to his team, **Gustav Nyquist** would have been a good candidate last season. With Henrik Zetterberg and Pavel Datsyuk healthy this year, Nyquist hasn't had the same opportunities, but his 23 points over 26 December and January games showed he remains vital.



**Nail Yakupov** isn't playing a sound enough all-around game for a contender to seek him out for an extended spring run. But the Oilers should extend his leash to hone his game to a well-balanced level or showcase him for a post-season deal. His ice time ramped up under coach Todd Nelson, but his goal total is down.



Barring a huge surge, the Panthers will miss the playoffs again. But as **Aaron Ekblad** continues his quest for the Calder Trophy, he has a chance to become the first rookie defenseman since the legendary Denis Potvin in 1973-74 to lead his team in scoring and the first 18-year-old blueliner ever to do it.



Kings captain **Dustin Brown's** slide down the depth chart hasn't been as precipitous as Mike Richards', but it's worth watching. Brown, 30, remains an assertive leader who is strong on the forecheck and loves to hit. But his scoring totals are a shadow of his 26-goal average during a five-year run. His playing style has aged his body.



It's not too late for **Thomas Vanek** to earn his \$6.5 million. His debut season in Minnesota, where he attended university, started badly. But a career-worst shooting percentage of 8.7, down from his lifetime mark of 14.4, suggested better luck was to come. He scored twice in his first 25 games, then seven times in his next 22.





## STRETCH DRIVE PLAYER TO WATCH



**Alex Galchenyuk's** entry-level deal expires this summer. With a spurt in the third quarter of the season, he put himself in a good position to earn \$850,000 in bonus money. And the meter will continue to click up for next season with a strong finish. It also might mean the difference between a bridge contract and a longer deal.



**Pekka Rinne's** health will decide how far the Predators go. He was the odds-on favorite for the Vezina Trophy and maybe even the Hart before a Jan. 13 knee sprain sidelined him three weeks. Nashville can only hope the rest keeps him fresh and that he doesn't aggravate the injury during the team's push for the Central Division crown.



Just how much hockey will **Cory Schneider** play this year? He finally has a crease to himself, and he's gotten the minutes to go with it. He was set to pass his single-season high for starts by early February. With the Devils out of the playoff picture, he might rest more down the stretch, but this will also be a good test for the quick goalie.



Not only is **Johnny Boychuk** a minute-munching D-man who has put up solid power play points for the Isles, but he's also an experienced veteran who can chat up the room. The latter will be key as New York heads towards the playoffs with potential to do damage. Boychuk won the Cup with Boston, but no player is satisfied with just one.



For the Blueshirts to reach the Cup final again, they'll need **Rick Nash** at his best. When hot, he's a juggernaut, and his size gives defenders fits. The top scorer on the team plays against the toughest competition of any Rangers forward and, with four shorthanded goals by early February, he was also a threat on the penalty kill.



## THE MELLOWEST MAN IN MONTREAL

A big reason why Price's play between the pipes is so hot this year? He's so darned good at playing it cool

**P**LAYING FOR THE MONTREAL CANADIENS in a town where nothing matters more is pressure-packed, to say the least. Goaltending is one of the most stressful jobs in sports, and no less of an authority than Habs great Jacques Plante once noted the position involves having a red light go off and 15,000 people screaming at you every time you make a mistake.

Carey Price actually has more than 20,000 fans watching him at the Bell Centre, but he's remarkably chill about his profession. "He's prepared every day," said teammate Jiri Sekac. "He's an unbelievable goalie, and the way he stays calm is amazing."

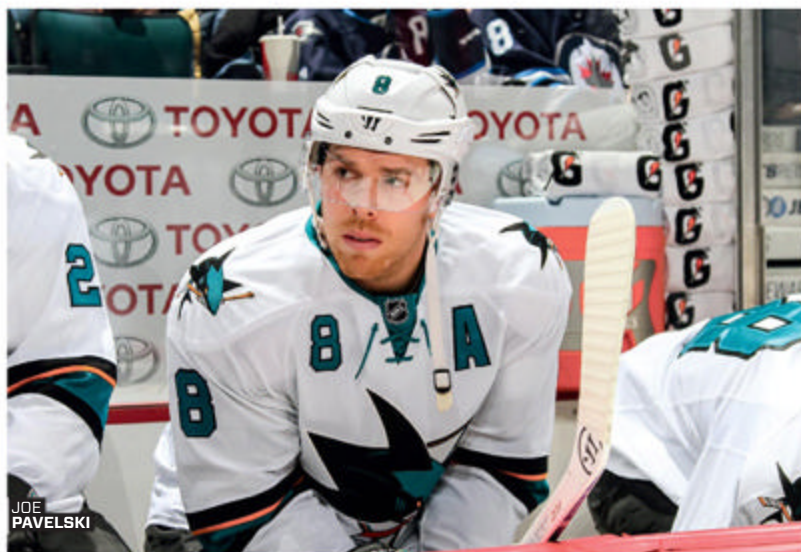
Getting into that Zen-like state seems easy for Price, even if winters in Montreal are a little foreboding. "It's minus-40 outside most of the winter, so you kind of just hang out at home and watch movies," Price said. "I have an awesome wife and two dogs that take the stress out of my life."

He can also escape to the rodeo in the summer. Price has a passion for the sport that he maintains runs through his Western blood. Growing up in a small B.C. town, he got to watch local stampedes and even pro circuits a few

hours away. "The beauty of it is that most of the things you do in a rodeo are all just things you do on a farm or a ranch," Price said. "For how hard they work, it's just like the NHL."

The netminder is particularly fond of team roping, an event he has tried in the past. In hockey, however, Price's individual value has been front and center once again. The Canadiens were one of the best teams in the Eastern Conference at the midway point, but they confounded stat-heads by being poor in possession numbers. Montreal may get outshot and outchanced many nights, but it's rare the Habs get outperformed in the crease thanks to Price. And getting great outings from the Canadian Olympian has been crucial, as Montreal's power play – one of the few aspects of the game a goalie can't influence – also misfired for the first half of the season.

And while you can't ask a player how it feels to be propping his team up, Price was diplomatic when the bad-possession-team question was popped. "That's just the way we roll, I guess," he said. "As long as we're winning games, nitpicking how we do it is pretty irrelevant." — RYAN KENNEDY



# THIS SHARK'S NO ONE-HIT WONDER

Pavelski's sizzling first half silences claims his goal-scoring explosion last year was a fluke

**S**TATISTICALLY SPEAKING, MAYBE IT'S time to judge Joe Pavelski by the company he keeps.

For the calendar year 2014, no NHLer bested the 44 goals Pavelski scored for the San Jose Sharks. Rick Nash and Tyler Seguin each potted 42, but they were first-round draft picks. Nash went No. 1 overall in 2012, Seguin No. 2 in 2010. Pavelski was chosen in the seventh round.

Pavelski's 41 goals for the 2013-14 season led the Sharks, but many considered it a career year that wouldn't be duplicated. Well, as of the NHL all-star break, Pavelski had 24 goals – half on the power play, tying him with Alex Ovechkin for the league lead – and was on pace for 41. Talk about consistency.

So how much importance does he put on topping last season's total? "You always want more, and as you get more, everything works out better, but there isn't a number," Pavelski said. "I don't have 42 goals posted on my fridge like I'm getting there. I'd like to get to 60. I'd like to get to 50. But that doesn't matter without the wins. That part of the game has to be strong."

Sharks coach Todd McLellan puts Pavelski's accomplishments in con-

text on a team filled with recognizable names such as Joe Thornton, Patrick Marleau, Logan Couture, Marc-Edouard Vlasic and Brent Burns. " 'Pav' right now might be our most natural scorer," McLellan said in late December. "The ability to get a deflection, a tip, score on a rebound."

But Pavelski can get fancy, too. See for yourself by going online and checking out the spin-o-rama, no-look backhand he scored in a 5-2 win over Edmonton Dec. 9.

Last season, some critics contended Pavelski's numbers were inflated by the fact he played most games on Thornton's line. But when Thornton missed four games with a shoulder injury in early January, Pavelski tallied two goals and three assists. Not to take anything away from Thornton, but Pavelski continued to score with Matt Nieto and Tomas Hertl as linemates.

While you're watching Pavelski the rest of this season, keep an eye on the front of his jersey, too. The Sharks have been captainless since August, going with four alternates. Pavelski is one of them – and the odds-on favorite to trade the 'A' for the 'C' when McLellan decides the time is right. — DAVID POLLAK

## STRETCH DRIVE PLAYER TO WATCH



After supplanting Kyle Turris as the Senators' No. 1 center, **Mika Zibanejad** picked up his production and became the player they envisioned when they drafted him sixth overall in 2011. A pending RFA, he can enhance his value with a strong finish and show the Senators they can build their offensive future around him and Bobby Ryan.



While the playoffs are an outside possibility, another story to watch in Philly is **Michael Del Zotto's** late-season play. Brought in as a reclamation project to take some of Kimmo Timonen's missing minutes, Del Zotto seeks a new contract. After a rough start, he's earned coach Craig Berube's trust by learning to read plays better.



Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin are undoubtedly crucial to the Pens, but let's not overlook **Kris Letang's** role. The team's top blueliner plays the toughest minutes of any Pens player by far and leads the team in average ice time at 25:10, putting him in the NHL's top 10. The slick rearguard is having a great offensive year, too.



The Vladimir Tarasenko-Jori Lehtera-Jaden Schwartz line flourished early, but St. Louis' usual top unit of **Alexander Steen**, David Backes and T.J. Oshie uncharacteristically struggled. Not anymore. They opened January as the NHL's hottest trio. Steen went nuts, with 17 points in nine games before the All-Star Game break.



You can excuse a Sharks fan for being nervous entering the playoffs with **Antti Niemi** starting between the pipes. One game, he'll shut the door and be unbeatable. The next, he lays an egg and can't stop a beach ball. Since winning the Cup for Chicago in 2010, Niemi has lost more playoff games than he's won with a pedestrian .905 SP.



## STRETCH DRIVE PLAYER TO WATCH



The Calder Trophy is a pipe-dream, but **Jonathan Drouin** can salvage his rookie season with a strong finish. He had just two goals after 41 games but displayed playmaking ability with eight assists in a 10-game stretch. Pulling down third-line minutes, he could provide play-off depth if he continues adjusting to the higher level of play.



Defenseman **Morgan Rielly** holds a key to Toronto's future, not just because he'll be a rare untouchable at the trade deadline. If he can handle top-pair minutes and battle elite forwards during injured captain Dion Phaneuf's absence, it will make the Leafs more confident they can move forward without Phaneuf or Cody Franson.



It was just four seasons ago the **Sedin twins** combined for 60 goals and 198 points. And while they rebounded from an injury-hindered 2013-14 in the first half, they're weren't lighting the lamp nearly enough if the Canucks wanted to make the playoffs. Daniel and Henrik were on pace to combine for just 32 goals and 140 points.



Adding blueliners Brooks Orpik and Matt Niskanen has had a pleasant trickle-down effect on the Caps. Not only have they gotten solid outings from those two, but the depth they bring has sprung **John Carlson**, 25, to a new level. He will reach career offensive bests while also leading the squad in average ice time a second straight year.



Who knew returning **Dustin Byfuglien** to defense would yield the best hockey of his career? He's been a man possessed at both ends of the ice and exploded for 21 points in 23 games after coach Paul Maurice moved him back to the blueline. 'Big Buff' was the Jet most responsible for their surprising playoff push.



## BRADEN BROADENS HIS HORIZONS

Holtby finally has coaches who suit his headspace in Washington – and he's playing better than ever

**F**EW NHL TEAMS RELIED ON THEIR starting goalie more before the all-star break than the Capitals did upon Braden Holtby, who started 39 of 46 games. That was a welcome change for a player who struggled through a miserable 2013-14.

He was asked to tweak his playing style in net last year under former coach Adam Oates. Holtby struggled, lost confidence and was nowhere near the player who started 21 playoff games and looked like the team's goalie of the future. But Holtby has found his game again under new coach Barry Trotz and Trotz's longtime goalie coach Mitch Korn, both of whom arrived in the off-season from Nashville. Korn, especially, espouses a mental approach to the position that agrees with Holtby.

Now the question for Washington: How much is too much? Holtby has never appeared in more than 48 regular season NHL games. That occurred last season, when his struggles forced the team to acquire veteran Jaroslav Halak for an ill-fated playoff run.

Oates and goalie coach Olie Kolzig asked Holtby to adopt a more conservative approach. It didn't go well. He finished with a .915 save percentage and

never recovered from a bad start even as Kolzig tried to find a balance between what Oates wanted and Holtby's natural instincts. That's all changed under Trotz and Korn. "There's no panic, no extra movement," Trotz said. "He's just very calm. He's seeing the puck, and he's made a gradual shift and is playing the way we knew he could."

Caps backup Justin Peters started once from Nov. 29 to the All-Star Game. That's how well Holtby began playing after another difficult opening to the season. He helped the Caps go on a 14-1-4 spree just before the break that vaulted the team into solid playoff position. A heavy workload doesn't appear to be a concern for Trotz. Holtby was on pace to pass his career-high in starts (45) and appearances (48) by mid-February at the latest.

Holtby did play a combined 61 games in 2012-13 with the Caps (36 games) and at AHL Hershey (25 games) before performing well in seven playoff starts against the New York Rangers that season. The last time any NHL goalies topped 65 games was 2011-12, when Nashville's Pekka Rinne – under Trotz and Korn – and Anaheim's Jonas Hiller appeared in 73 apiece. — **BRIAN MCNALLY**

# PROSPECT REPORT



## THE MOUTH THAT ROARED

Ho-Sang doesn't mince words when talking about his game and expectations, and he can back it up with numbers

BY JEFF BLAY

**J**OSH HO-SANG IS EDGY. HE'S confident, outspoken and often controversial. While those personality traits may be a concern to some in the hockey community, one thing is certain: his skill is undeniable. Just ask Niagara IceDogs coach-GM Marty Williamson: "He's electrifying. Absolutely. What he can do with the puck and the speed he can do it at, that's something that has pro written all over it. He's got that part down pat. It's the rest of the game he needs to work on."

Williamson sees more positives than negatives in the 19-year-old

**JOSH HO-SANG**



**POSITION**

Right Wing

**AGE** 19

**HEIGHT** 6-0

**WEIGHT** 170 lbs

**DRAFTED**

NYI, 28th in 2014

### SCORING MACHINE

Josh Ho-Sang is scoring at close to a 100-point pace in his third season in the OHL.

New York Islanders prospect, who during his Ontario League draft year was mentioned in the same breath as then Toronto Marlboros midget teammate Connor McDavid. That's why Williamson traded a good portion of the IceDogs' future to the Windsor Spitfires to acquire Ho-Sang this past November. "His on-ice product is what it is – he's a wonderful offensive talent and he makes players around him better," Williamson said. "We had a need for that. We did our homework, we talked to the Islanders, talked to teammates and it looked like he was a kid who was ready for a second chance."

In his first 28 games with Niagara, the six-foot, 170-pound Ho-Sang had nine goals and 37 points. In his previous 11 games with Windsor, he notched three goals and 19 points – on pace to eclipse the 85-point season he had with Windsor in 2013-14.

But not everyone shares that same faith in Ho-Sang as Williamson and the Islanders, who drafted him 28th overall in 2014 before signing him to a three-year entry-level deal.

Ho-Sang has gained a reputation for being candid and cocky. Nevertheless, he has no qualms with the way he's perceived. "Everybody's waiting for me to say something crazy," he said. "With all that stuff, it's just my personality, or a little piece of it. I think you tend to be a lot happier when you're yourself all the time. I didn't hold anything back in my draft year – verbally or on the ice – and I ended up in a place where I'm really happy and excited to move forward."


The latter statement came on the

heels of Ho-Sang being snubbed – and not for the first time – by Hockey Canada, which recently left the promising winger off of its roster for the world juniors. He's famously called out the organization on more than one occasion for not inviting him to its selection camps.

Despite the questions looming around his maturity level, Ho-Sang is focusing more on the positives this time around. "They gave me a shot this year at the (CHL-Russia) Super Series and that meant something to me," he said. "However big or small it was, they gave me a chance to play, relatively, for my country. I'm happy with the performance I put on. Those guys are the decision makers."

Ho-Sang had a goal and two assists and drew two penalties to help Team Ontario to a 5-1 win over Russia in November.

Aside from colorful persona, the knock on Ho-Sang is he needs to improve his defensive skills and he tends to carry the puck for too long. "Working with Josh is about getting a foundation to his game and understanding both ends and the neutral zone and how important they all are," Williamson said. "He knows he's got some weaknesses and he needs to realize there are times when you need to bail on plays and not try and make a highlight film every shift."

Even with the need for improvement and the adversity he's faced the past couple of years, Ho-Sang is content with his game. "It's the happiest I've been in my hockey career in I don't know how long," Ho-Sang said. "Hopefully next year I'm in the NHL – that's the dream. But right now, I'm not too worried about anything individual, I'm just trying to help get our team into the playoffs and focusing on the bigger picture." 

**7**

More points for Josh Ho-Sang – in three fewer games – than ballyhooed linemate Connor McDavid (79 vs. 72) for the Toronto Marlboros minor midget team in 2011-12. Ho-Sang is one year older than McDavid.





# MEET RED WINGS' LATEST STEAL

Detroit has a knack for unearthing gems in the late rounds of the NHL draft. Mark Axel Holmstrom down as a player to watch

BY RYAN KENNEDY

**A**XEL HOLMSTROM PLAYS for the best team in the Swedish League and sits among the leaders in scoring by a teenager in the nation's highest circuit. He was also the center on Sweden's most dangerous line at the world juniors and he can kill penalties, so of course the Detroit Red Wings drafted him in the seventh round last year, right?

Shocking but true. The franchise synonymous with late-round steals may have another one in Skelleftea's Holmstrom, who is not related to former Red Wing Tomas Holmstrom, but does remind Detroit brass of the fan favorite. "He's super

competitive," said Red Wings assistant GM Ryan Martin. "He goes to the hard areas and the front of the net, but his skating needs work – it's a lot of the same things people said about Tomas."

Axel Holmstrom jumped on the draft radar last season at the world under-18s. Playing on a line with William Nylander and Oskar Lindblom, Holmstrom registered 11 points in seven games, trailing only Nylander's 16 points in the tourney as Sweden lost bronze to Canada. Nylander went early in the first round to Toronto, while Lindblom was tabbed by Philadelphia in the fifth.

But Holmstrom was still on the board when Detroit stepped up with the 196th pick overall. Sitting at home in the apartment he shared with Skelleftea teammate and fellow draft hopeful Sebastian Aho, Holmstrom went through a range of emotions that day, since only his named was called. "We both had a good chance to be drafted," Holmstrom said. "Sebastian – a lot of people say he's too small to play in the NHL but I think he's so clever that he can handle it. I was happy, but I was suffering with Sebastian, too. So I didn't celebrate too hard."

Martin was pleasantly surprised when he saw Holmstrom's performance for Sweden in the summer, when the national team played exhibition games against Team USA and Finland in Lake Placid, N.Y. And the fact the young center can

## SLICK SWEDE


Axel Holmstrom is competitive but must work on his skating to succeed at the NHL level.

play in all situations while using hockey sense and hands to create offense just seems tailor-made for the Red Wings organization. But that doesn't mean Detroit will rush Holmstrom or fellow Swede Christoffer Ehn (a fourth-rounder in 2014 who also looked good at the world juniors) over to North America.

Martin loves that the new collective bargaining agreement gives teams four years to assess European picks now instead of two before signing them, since players develop at different rates and Euros sometimes feel more comfortable on home soil. "I see them both as NHL prospects," Martin said. "But if they want to develop over there, that's great."

Holmstrom did make the trek across the Atlantic for Detroit's rookie camp in the summer and even that small taste lived up to the hype. After all, this is the franchise of Lidstrom, Zetterberg and many other Tre Kronor heroes. "The Red Wings are pretty much the most Swedish team and the most popular NHL team in Sweden," Holmstrom said. "It's a big honor, of course."

As for how the Red Wings got Holmstrom so late, Martin takes a diplomatic approach. It wasn't just an individual skill such as skating that was holding the young center back from a higher slot, but the format of the draft itself. "Seven rounds goes awfully quick," Martin said. "There are a lot of skilled players that go late and some that don't get picked at all. Teams are basically picking seven guys each."

Luckily for the Red Wings, Holmstrom seems to be one of those high-skill guys destined for more. And while Martin is humble, let's pump Detroit's tires for them: it takes front office talent to pick the best on-ice talent and the Wings have struck gold too many times for their draft history to be just luck. 

AXEL HOLMSTROM

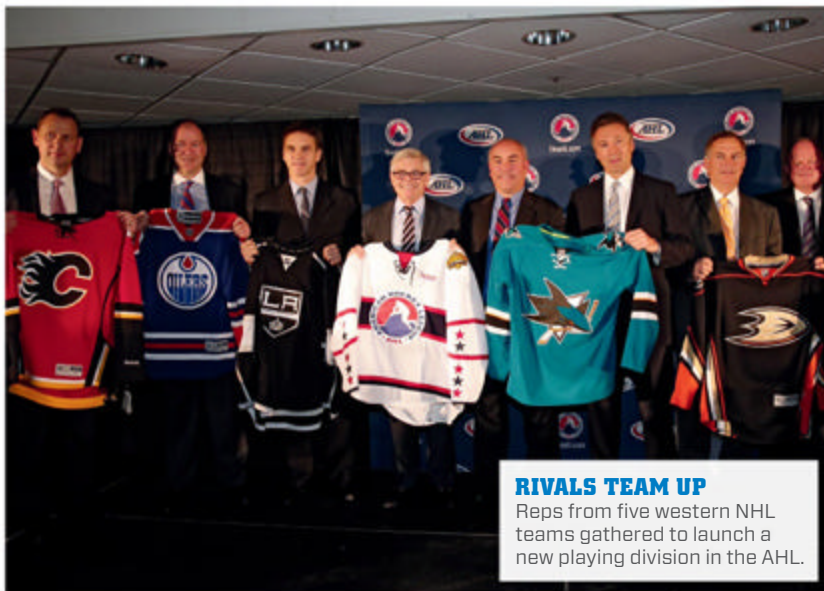


## AXEL HOLMSTROM

POS C AGE 18 HT 6-0 WT 198 lbs  
DRAFTED Detroit, 196th overall in 2014



READ FEATURES FROM RYAN KENNEDY EVERY DAY AT [THEHOCKEYNEWS.COM](http://THEHOCKEYNEWS.COM)



#### RIVALS TEAM UP

Reps from five western NHL teams gathered to launch a new playing division in the AHL.

# PACIFIC HEIGHTS BUILDING BLOCKS

The creation of an all-California division in the AHL is sure to strengthen the foundation of growth in the state

**W**HEN HIGH-RANKING REPS FROM five NHL teams show up for a press conference, it's a big deal. Add in American League commissioner David Andrews and NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly and you've got serious gravity. The topic of the late January meeting was the creation of an AHL Pacific Division, an all-California cluster that will not only change the best development league, but also hockey itself.

An increasing number of Californians have been loving hockey lately – and there are more to reach. The Golden State, with more than 25,000 players registered through USA Hockey in 2013-14, has more skaters than all but six states (New York, Michigan, Minnesota, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts) and

a population bigger than Canada. For grassroots hockey folk, the addition of five AHL teams to the state is huge. Art Trottier is vice-president of Anaheim's Rinks program and he can envision the effect this will have on the Southern California high school league the Ducks created in 2008-09. "From the high school end, we have a couple teams in San Diego and we hope to add a few more next year," he said. "It's good for hockey in Southern California, it's that simple."

When Anaheim's high school league started, there was just one team. Now it's up to 41 and already boasts a national champion in the 2013 Santa Margarita Eagles. Though the circuit isn't sending recruits to NCAA powerhouses the way schools in Minnesota or Massachusetts

have been, there have been success stories such as Joonas Kunnas, who played for the Eagles in 2010-11 and now patrols the blueline at the University of Connecticut. The Sharks also have a high school league in Northern California that is 26 teams strong. That circuit, now in its 15th season, began with four teams.

Wayne Gretzky's arrival in L.A., helped jump-start hockey in California from a development perspective. As Sharks COO John Tortora noted, all three NHL teams from the state boast local products: the Sharks have Matt Nieto and Matt Tennyson, Los Angeles has Alec Martinez and Anaheim counts Emerson Etem.

While Stockton, Bakersfield and Ontario all housed ECHL teams, the closer connection between the AHL and NHL will stir up more interest, especially since geography will help the teams when it comes to call-ups. "You could see a player in San Diego one night, then Anaheim the next," Trottier said.

The last gap to fill in California now comes at the NCAA level. While the state does not have a Div. I team, the elevation of Arizona State has stoked fires in the West, particularly since a Pac-12 Conference would be as big for the sport (in terms of mass American exposure) as the Big Ten Conference that was formed when Penn State took the successful plunge two years ago. From the rumblings I'm hearing, the University of Southern California is the most likely to make the jump first, while Stanford (near San Jose) is another intriguing option since many of its rivals in other sports are Ivy hockey-playing schools such as Harvard, Princeton and Yale.

For obvious reasons, grassroots hockey is important to us and in the past we've written about the stagnating and sometimes falling numbers of players in Canada. While that's nothing to ignore, it is great to see hockey rising in other areas. With three Stanley Cups in the past eight seasons, California is producing winners at the NHL level and that is trickling down in the best ways possible. With five AHL teams now joining the fold, exposure to the game is falling into all the nooks and crannies of the state – and hockey as a whole will benefit. **TEN**

## THE PAC FIVE CALIFORNIA'S NEW AHL ENTRIES



**THIS YEAR**  
Norfolk  
**NEXT YEAR**  
San Diego



**THIS YEAR**  
Adirondack  
**NEXT YEAR**  
Stockton



**THIS YEAR**  
Oklahoma City  
**NEXT YEAR**  
Bakersfield



**THIS YEAR**  
Manchester  
**NEXT YEAR**  
Ontario



**THIS YEAR**  
Worcester  
**NEXT YEAR**  
San Jose



# Guess WHO!



"I captured four Lady Byngs, plus the 1954 Norris as the NHL's best defenseman."

"I won four Stanley Cups with Detroit and four more with Toronto after a 1960 trade."

"Leafs coach Punch Imlach made me a center. I racked up points in a 'second career.'"

## Separated AT BIRTH



**R. NUGENT-HOPKINS**

Works for struggling team that often finishes 30th. Plays on CBC in a city where hockey is religion.



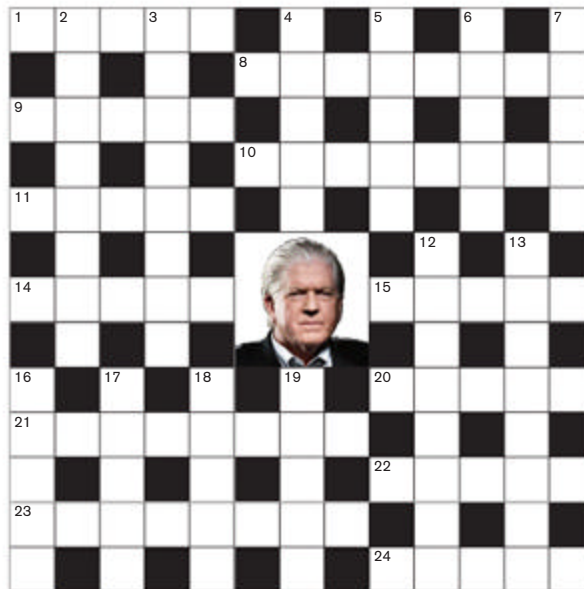
**JACK MCBRAYER**

Works for struggling TV show on 30 Rock. Does anything for NBC that isn't against his religion.

Email your suggestions to [sab@thehockeynews.com](mailto:sab@thehockeynews.com)

## CROSSWORD

By Larry Humber



ANSWERS AVAILABLE IN THE NEXT ISSUE AND AT [THN.com/XWORD](http://THN.com/XWORD)

**LAST ISSUE'S CROSSWORD SOLUTION ACROSS** 1. LEAFS, 8. MADHOUSE, 9. MINUS, 10. PANTHERS, 11. NIFTY, 14. FLEET, 15. DRAFT, 20. EDDIE, 21. LEHTONEN, 22. STRIP, 23. SCRIVENS, 24. DRILL  
**DOWN** 2. ELIGIBLE, 3. FOURTEEN, 4. LAVAL, 5. SHOTS, 6. DUKES, 7. PEPSI, 12. PREDATOR, 13. OFFICIAL, 16. BLAST, 17. CHARA, 18. SOLVE, 19. TEENS

### ACROSS

- 1 \_\_\_ Burke, pictured, is a feisty Flames exec
- 8 Jose \_\_\_ was NHL MVP in 2002
- 9 Sell tickets at inflated prices
- 10 He was Norris Trophy winner in 2013
- 11 Dumb
- 14 T.J. \_\_\_ is a shootout specialist
- 15 \_\_\_ Pronger won Hart, Norris in 2000
- 20 Sarnia's junior team
- 21 Where 'Stevie Y' is GM
- 22 One of the first hockey card makers
- 23 Ron Francis is GM here
- 24 Nickname of Michigan's WHA team

### DOWN

- 2 He was taken first overall in 2002
- 3 An NHL division
- 4 Play poorly in pressure situations
- 5 Added money
- 6 Roberto Luongo is known as '\_\_\_ Lu'
- 7 Former Islander captain \_\_\_ Jonsson
- 12 Blanks: two words
- 13 City that returned to the NHL in 2011
- 16 P.J. \_\_\_ played for four teams in the East
- 17 Heads-up hockey is \_\_\_ hockey
- 18 Niagara \_\_\_ was home of junior hockey's Flyers
- 19 \_\_\_ Gallivan was a legendary broadcaster

## Behind THE MASK



**KARRI RAMO** | CALGARY FLAMES

Obscure mask designs are often the most interesting, and Ramo's takes the cake. Jason Livery's art features the lead from *Vincent*, Tim Burton's 1982 stop-motion short film. Vincent, voiced by Vincent Price, is a young boy obsessed with Edgar Allan Poe. — **MATT LARKIN**



**MICHIGAN STATE** | 2014-15

## Jersey HOUND

The last time Michigan State needed a special jersey, the Spartans went old-school by honoring the university's 1966 national championship squad.

With an outdoor game against Michigan this season, Michigan State went the other way, rocking more futuristic swag.

While college teams can sometimes rely on lettering too much, Michigan State put its iconic Spartan logo front and center here, coloring it bronze and adding black trim to the sweater while still maintaining the green the team is identified with. — **RYAN KENNEDY**



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# NOW THE HARD WORK BEGINS

Just because Martin Brodeur wants to transition into management doesn't mean it will be smooth sailing



MARTIN BRODEUR

**P**ERHAPS THE MOST ENCOURAGING thing that came out of Martin Brodeur's retirement announcement, aside from the fact that he wants to stay in the game, is that he's willing to learn. There's little doubt Brodeur realizes that if he wants to be a success in management, he's going to have to apply the same work ethic and attention to detail to his new career that made him one of the greatest goalies ever.

But like the junior phenom who can't do a chin-up, there's a good chance Brodeur has no idea how difficult it will be and how much work lies ahead of him. If he does ultimately want to become a GM, that's great. There should always be room for icons in our game, whether it's as coaches, GMs, presidents or guys who shake hands with fans and present oversized cheques to charities.

If it turns out Brodeur wants to run a hockey department, he is looking at a four-to-five year learning curve. Because if he truly wants to be great, he'll follow the Steve Yzerman template and eschew the Brett Hull method.

And here's where things get dicey. The worst thing for everyone would be to look at Brodeur as a savior, particularly for the Devils. GM Lou Lamoriello is 72 and the past couple seasons have not been kind to him or the franchise. If Brodeur wants to tarnish his legacy, the perfect way to do it would be for the Devils to place him in a high management position for which he's not ready.

That's because there's a lot that Brodeur doesn't know. Over the next while, he's going to have to learn it gets really cold in Prince Albert in the winter. He's going to go from having his travel arrangements made for him to having to make them himself. He's going to learn that making trades and evaluating players is a different process on the other side of the glass. He'll learn if he thought

he missed his family as a player, it's going to be twice as difficult now.

A case in point comes from a former pro I spoke with who is now in management. This player was far more astute than the average guy, had a keen mind and good observations. He developed into a faceoff and two-way specialist, so he watched a ton of video when he played. "I found I knew absolutely zero what went into the day-to-day operations of a hockey team," he said. "And I guarantee you (Brodeur) will have no idea what goes on behind the scenes and the number of hours it takes to evaluate talent. As a player, you sit there and say, 'why can't we go out and get this guy, then you find out how hard it is to get that guy.'"

Another executive who did not play in the NHL said Brodeur will be surprised at how few of the talents he possessed as an athlete translate into being a successful GM. And he's right. That's why so few of the truly great players have gone on to run hockey departments. In fact, there are only 14 Hall of Famers who have gone on to become GMs and there are as many disasters as there are successes in that group. Lester Patrick, Jack Adams, Milt Schmidt, Serge Savard and Bob Gainey are the only ones who have won championships. Bob Clarke, Ken Dryden had some success, Tony and Phil Esposito, Bob Pulford and Brett Hull quite a bit less. Steve Yzerman is showing a lot of promise and the jury is still out on Joe Sakic and Ron Francis. By contrast, the most successful GMs were either fringe players or had no experience playing at a high level. Jay Feaster, who won the Cup with Tampa Bay in 2004, made his way into management as a contract wonk and doesn't even know how to skate. Ken Holland was a minor league journeyman goalie and Sam Pollock started his career managing a softball team for which many of the Canadiens played.

“

**OVER THE NEXT WHILE, HE'S GOING TO LEARN IT GETS REALLY COLD IN PRINCE ALBERT IN THE WINTER**

Those guys had no choice but to work their way through every level of the system because the keys to the executive washroom were not available to them. There are more and more iconic players getting involved in management and some find they want to put in the work and some of them don't. That's the decision Brodeur faces the next couple years.

One member of an NHL management team recalled a former star player who went into management and when the two of them were on their first trip to scout the minor league squad, he turned to the former player and asked what he thought of the experience. "He said, 'I'm not too sure. This is the first American League game I've ever been to,'" the executive said. "That guy is now in meetings 10 hours a day. I'm not sure if he likes it, but he realizes it's something he's going to have to do."

It helps that Brodeur is a good person, a hockey guy who has a passion for the game. He plays road hockey with his kids. He seems to want to be in the game for the right reasons. He's not terribly impressed with himself and you get the sense he knows what he doesn't know. That's a good start. Now comes the hard stuff. **TEN**



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